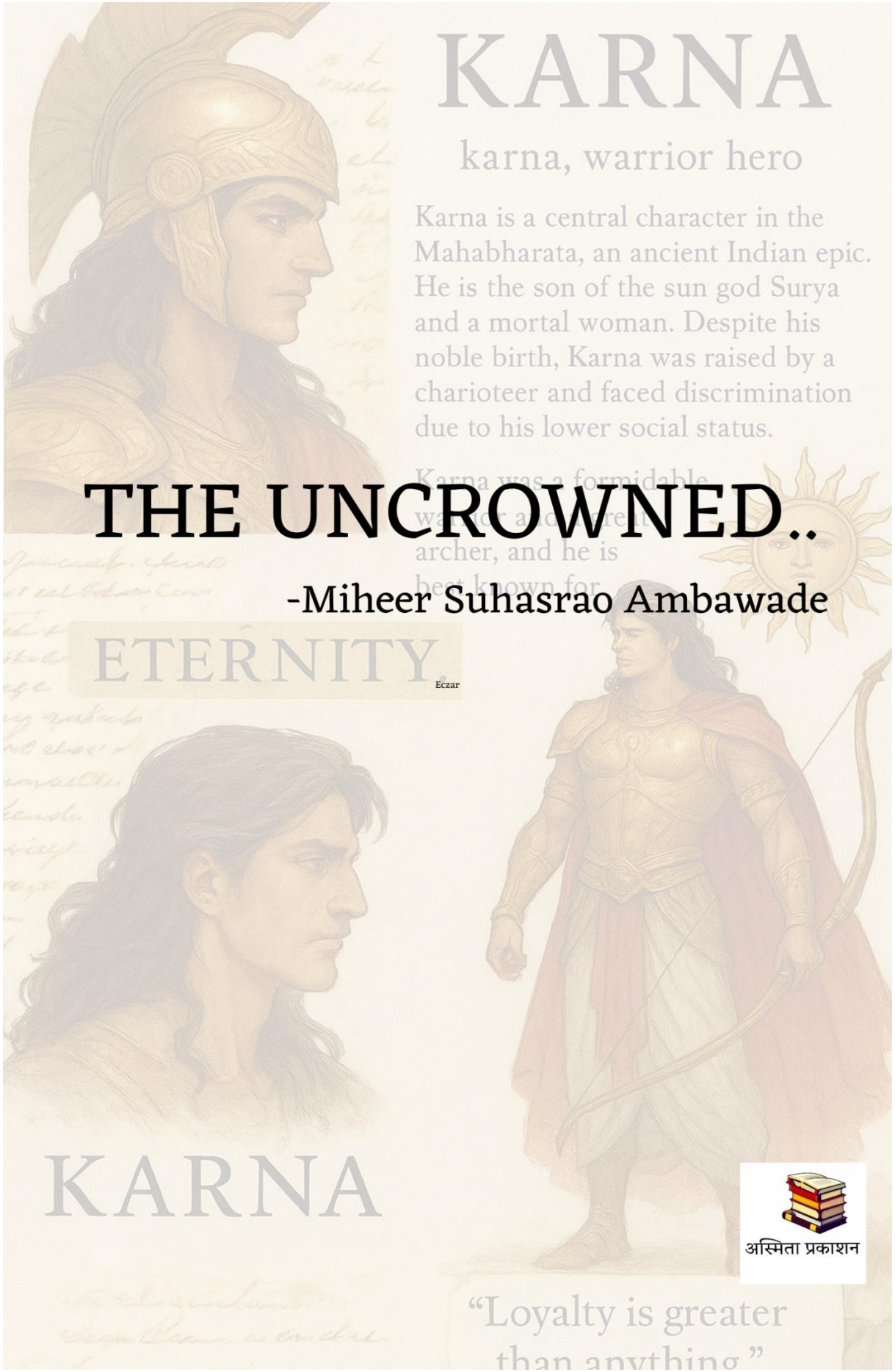
KARNA
karna, warrior hero
Karna is a central character in the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic. He is the son of the sun god Surya and a mortal woman. Despite his noble birth, Karna was raised by a charioteer and faced discrimination due to his lower social status.
Karna was a formidable
archer, and he is
ETERNITY.
Eczar
KARNA
"Loyalty is greater
than anything."

THE UNCROWNED..

-Miheer Suhasrao Ambawade

अस्मिता प्रकाशन

THE UNCROWNED..

The grand epic on Karna

-

- **Miheer Ambawade**

The Uncrowned

Miheer Suhasrao Ambawade

Epic poetry

ISBN 978-81-964797-2-5

Asmitaa Publications

THE ENGLISH VERSION OF SHIKAST

@asmita ambawade

Edition first

20-3-2024

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for engaging with *Shardul Shikast*. Your support, your words, and your reflections have truly made this journey worthwhile.

To the readers, your love and appreciation of my work have been a constant source of motivation. *Shardul Shikast* was born from a deep reverence for Karna, a figure whose story has long fascinated and inspired me. Through this epic, I sought to share his struggles, his choices, and his unwavering commitment to honor. Your warm embrace of Karna's story, his virtues, and his ultimate sacrifice fills me with immense pride. You have allowed me to tell this tale, and in doing so, you have given Karna the voice he truly deserves.

To the critics, your insights, no matter how challenging, have been equally valuable. Every critique, every comment has pushed me to think deeper, reflect further, and refine my work. It is through your lens that I have come to understand the nuances of my own writing and the complex layers of the story I tried to unfold. Your perspectives have not only helped me improve but also inspired me to look at Karna's tale from different angles. This book would not be complete without your contributions, and for that, I thank you.

After reflecting on the critiques, I felt compelled to not only clarify my vision in a detailed proof book but to also bring this narrative to a global audience. *Shardul Shikast* has now found its way into English, and I hope it continues to resonate with readers from all walks of life, inspiring thought, debate, and admiration for the warrior who has long been misunderstood.

In the end, my goal was simple: to honor Karna, to give him a voice, and to ensure his legacy lives on in all its complexity and grandeur. And I owe this success to all of you—readers, critics, and everyone who has supported me along the way.

Thank you, from the depths of my heart.

With immense respect and gratitude,
Miheer Ambawade

Preface to *Uncrowned*: The Tale of Karna

In the vast sea of epic narratives, few figures stand as towering, yet misunderstood, as Karna. Known as the "Uncrowned King," Karna's life is a saga of loyalty, sacrifice, honor, and tragedy. He is a character whose virtues and flaws intertwined in such a way that they shaped the entire Mahabharata. *Uncrowned* is not just the retelling of his story but a deep, contemplative journey into his soul. This work, a translation of my epic poetry *Shardul Shikast*, is a heartfelt attempt to give voice to Karna, to explore his struggles, to answer the questions that linger about his life, his choices, and his eventual fate.

Writing *Shardul Shikast* was an exploration into the untold aspects of Karna's persona. For years, I have found myself captivated by the complexity of his character. The Mahabharata's narrative casts Karna as the tragic hero, but behind this image lies a deeper reality, one that requires a closer look, a more empathetic understanding of his life. Karna, born to Kunti but raised by a charioteer's family, grew up in a world that never truly embraced him. The Kauravas, though his half-siblings, rejected him, and yet, his loyalty remained unwavering. The Pandavas, his true brothers, were bound by blood but distant in spirit. Karna's life was not defined by his lineage or his birthright but by the choices he made, often at the cost of his own happiness.

Uncrowned aims to capture the essence of these choices. The poetry in *Shardul Shikast* is the result of years of reflection, reading, and analysis of Karna's life and actions. Through the verses, I sought to paint a picture of his inner turmoil, his moral dilemmas, and the ever-present conflict between dharma (duty) and adharma (unrighteousness) that consumed him. But as with all great epics, the beauty of Karna's story lies in its universality. His struggles are not confined to the boundaries of the Mahabharata; they resonate deeply within the hearts of those who, like him, are forced to navigate a world where loyalty, love, and duty often clash.

I am fully aware that *Shardul Shikast* has been both loved and criticized. To some, Karna remains a hero, while others see him as a villain, a tragic figure who made his own bed in the battlefield of life. For me, Karna is neither purely good nor purely evil. He is human—a product of circumstance, choice, and fate. His courage, his unwavering commitment to friendship, and his readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake of honor are qualities that deserve recognition. But his decisions, particularly the one to stand by Duryodhana, have often been viewed as morally ambiguous. That moral complexity is what makes Karna such a compelling and timeless character. It is this complexity that I wished to convey in my work.

Writing the detailed proof book that followed *Shardul Shikast* was, in many ways, an attempt to answer the critiques, to clarify my vision, and to present a more comprehensive understanding of Karna's actions. The book provided deeper insights into the motives behind Karna's decisions and his internal struggles. Yet, as I reflected on the reactions to the work, I realized that for Karna's story to reach the world in its entirety, it needed to transcend linguistic boundaries. That is when I decided to translate *Shardul Shikast* into English, for I wanted Karna's voice to be heard not just by those who read Marathi, but by anyone, anywhere, who is willing to listen.

Uncrowned is, therefore, the manifestation of this endeavor—a bridge between two languages, two cultures, and two worlds. It is my attempt to ensure that Karna's story is not confined to the pages of an ancient text but remains alive in the hearts and minds of people today. Through this translation, I hope that readers from diverse backgrounds will be able to engage with Karna's story, understand his inner conflict, and perhaps even find reflections of themselves in his choices.

The story of Karna is not one of simple victories or defeats. It is a story of a man who defied the odds, lived by his own code of honor, and ultimately embraced his fate with unwavering resolve. Whether he was right or wrong in his decisions is not for me to judge—*Uncrowned* is not an attempt to vindicate Karna or condemn him. It is an exploration of a man who was, in many ways, ahead of his time—a man who walked a lonely path, not in search of glory, but of righteousness as he understood it.

To the readers who have supported me and to the critics who have challenged me, I owe my deepest gratitude. Your words, whether of praise or criticism, have shaped *Shardul Shikast* and now *Uncrowned* into the work it has become. I hope that this journey through Karna's life, through his triumphs and failures, will inspire you to reflect on your own choices and the sacrifices we all make in the pursuit of our own truths.

May Karna's story continue to illuminate the complexities of the human experience, and may we all strive to live with the same integrity and honor that he did, even in the face of the greatest trials.

To my revered teacher, *Shankar Mohan Kamble,*
Your unwavering support and belief in me during my struggle with dyslexia helped me discover strength I never knew I had. You guided me through those challenging days with patience, encouragement, and wisdom, and for that, I am forever grateful.
This book is a testament to your impact on my life. Thank you for lighting the path when I couldn't see it myself.
With deepest gratitude and respect,
Miheer Ambawade

सूतो वा सूतपुत्रो वा यो वा को वा भवाम्यहम्। दैवायत्तं
कुले जन्म मदायत्तं तु पौरुषम्॥

Whether I am a weaver or his son, whoever or whatever I am, the birth in this family was given by my Daiva or fate.
But the prowess and power I have accomplished are by my own self.

Destiny...

I bear the burden of the Lord of the Earth,
I am the Anjaneya upon the chariot.
I am Narayan, the charioteer,
And I am Kunti, who cast you into the fire.

I am destiny—the one who sows brotherhood's ruin.
I am Shon, Adhirath Baba, and Radha too.
I am Panchakodi, and I am Panchali.
I am Indra, the beggar at your door.

I am victory's arrows, Vaijayanti of the gods.
I am the sage who cursed you.
I am the strategist, Madhusudan.
I am Kauteya Arjuna too.

Yet...
O Righteous Charioteer!
Your golden radiance shines pure.
You alone stand unmatched,
You alone—Radheya Karna!

Mother Kunti...

A princess of the warrior clan, adorned in pride,
A royal name with a haughty stride.
A life of play, carefree and bright,
Serving sages, she sought her light.

The boon of Sage Durvasa she gained,
Unaware of the fate ordained.
A mere mistake?—No, a lifelong stain,
A guilt that forever would remain.

A child before marriage—what a plight!
Branded impure, her honor in blight.
A blemish upon her father’s name,
Her virtue drowned in endless shame.

How could she let her newborn go?
Yet fear gripped her, whispering woe.
A Kshatriya princess bows to none,
The past must never be undone.

"Nurse, prepare—the deed is set,
To cleanse my sins, to pay my debt.
A path to hell I now embrace,
Let fate erase my life's disgrace."

Dress the casket with lotus bright,
But wait—let me see him in the light.
Drink, my child, this final sip,
Before time seals its cruel grip.

The Ashwa River flows, crimson-tide,
A shiver runs through, a heart denied.
My child, my sin, into the stream,
A mother’s curse—her shattered dream.

But am I not a mother still?
Am I not bound by nature’s will?
To cast an infant into death’s sea—
Oh fate! Is this what it means to be me?

What shall become of him? How shall he live?
Regret, my shadow, shall never forgive.

His round face glows with celestial grace,
Golden armor, earrings in place.
Eyes of deep blue, a forehead vast,
Beauty unmatched, a fate held fast.

Like the ripened heart of a fruit divine,
Yet cast away—no longer mine...

O Mother Radha, Why Are My Eyes Deep Blue?

O Mother Radha, why are my eyes deep blue?
Perhaps they carry the weight of your worries too?
Like the vast embrace of Mother Ganga's tide,
Your love divine, a banyan's shade so wide.

In the darkest sky, you are my moon's embrace,
You are my mother—before you, my hands I place.
Your toil, a sea of endless grace,
Your love, like Ganga's, none can replace.

Radha-Mother, your love surpasses Shon's,
With Adhirath Baba's strength, my fortune is sown.
I remember—
You cleansed me, my every stain,
Yet what is a Kshatriya, and what is a Suta's name?

I swear to you, Mother Radha, my fate I shall mold,
With strength and might, my father's honor I'll uphold.
You shall feel pride in your Vasudeva's son,
No shame shall shadow the deeds I have done.

But now, O Mother, hush my restless mind,
I am weary, let peace be kind.
At dusk, tell me a tale untold,
And for now, serve me something sweet and warm to hold...

Kunti's Lament on Vasantik Purnima

The night was bright, the moon aglow,
A royal feast, a grandest show.
Aryavarta beheld the Kurus' might,
A special eve, bathed in light.

O nurse, tell me, will fate be kind?
The wait is long, it plagues my mind.
Just yesterday, they were but boys,
Now stand like trees, their strength, their poise.

How must my own child appear?
A king adorned with jewels clear?
O nurse, Arjuna is Gurudev's pride,
Today the greatest shall be glorified.

Who shall earn the warrior's crown?
A Kuru prince or Pandu's own?
My restless heart, a storm it weaves,
Drenched in longing, a mother grieves.

The Sun-God hides his face today,
The river's murmur won't drift away.
Where is he, my forsaken son?
Is he alive, or is he gone?

The trial begins, the stage is set,
The air is still, the breath is held.
Dushasana, Vikarna, step forth bold,
Then Nakula, Sahadeva, their strength untold.

Yet still, Arjuna is nowhere near,
Duryodhana, Bhima, clash with cheer.
Five sons I see, safe and sound,
But what of him, lost, unbound?

Arjuna's arrows dazzle bright,
His art, a marvel, pure delight.
Yet my heart, an aching stream,
Still thirsts for one unseen dream.

Bhima and Duryodhana pause at last,
The echoes of war fade to the past.
The Guru speaks—the best is known,
A warrior supreme, his skill is shown.

But halt, O Master, a voice resounds,
A call that shakes the sacred grounds.
"Who are you, O valiant youth?
Step with care, speak the truth.

This hall belongs to royal kin,
Reveal your name, the blood within.
Arjuna’s skill, his triumph stands,
I shaped his art with these two hands.

But tell me, stranger, who are you?
What name, what house, what lineage true?"

Karna’s Decree...

Gurudev...

Take back your words at once,
Do not hastily declare the greatest archer!
Yes, Arjuna is skilled, no doubt,
But "supreme" is an empty title.

As long as this contest was among the Kuru,
I remained silent in patience.
But, Acharya, was it not you
Who invited the world to this duel?
Yet now, you promise the world
That Arjuna is the finest of all?

Am I not part of this world?
Am I not the blazing fire born of the Sun?
Archery is my lineage,
Strength is my caste!
Tell me, Gurudev,
What is my identity?
I am Adhirath's son—Radhéya, Karna.

But Adhirath's son means I am a Suta,
And this contest is for Kshatriyas alone.
Did you not teach me this?
Did you not tell me
That I am unfit to stand here?
Have I no right to wield a bow?
What say you, Suta's son?
Where stands my brother, the royal Arjuna,
And where stands a mere charioteer's child?

A son of a Suta must stay in his place,
Hands on the reins, minding the horses.
Speak not, remain silent.
Even the mighty Drona cannot judge true strength.

A thunderous voice shattered the silence,
Like a whip lashing through the air.
A young warrior, fierce-eyed,
Rose against this injustice.

"Yes, Karna is the son of a charioteer—
But where is it written
That only a prince may sign his name in strength?
This arena of the Kuru is just,
It knows no bias, it holds no chains!"

"If he is still deemed unworthy,
If he is not yet fit to compete,
Then hear me now—

From this moment, Karna is my friend.
From this hour, he is king of Anga!"

"Let no tongue dare mock his birth!
Let no hand scorn his might!
For the one who shames strength
Shall be trampled beneath an elephant’s feet!"

"Prepare the coronation, let it be done at once!
Acharya, Karna shall compete,
And a verdict must be declared today!"

"Remember, O learned ones—
Was not Lanka ruled by Ravana, a Brahmin king?
Did not Lord Rama, a Kshatriya,
Battle him without shame?"

"If lineage matters so much,
Then pray, remain within your temples!
Perform your rites, offer your counsel,
And abandon all dreams of thrones and power!"

Duryodhana raged like a storm,
His fury unbound by fear.
Yet, in his unshaken love,
Radhéya found himself tethered—
Bound forever in friendship’s debt.

But then, fate turned another way.
The scent of sandal and musk filled the air,
Drums and conches roared like a wedding chorus,
Mantras hummed, shlokas echoed—
And sacred waters anointed my brow.
But more than that,
My soul was drenched in love for my friend.

With a golden crown placed upon my hair,
With royal robes draped over a charioteer’s son,
With a silver rock struck against the ground,
The court resounded—
"Hail Angaraj Karna! Victory be his!"

For decades, no man had dared this,
But Duryodhana did what no one else had.
He laughed in the face of mockery and declared—
"Karna is no longer a charioteer’s son,
He is Angaraj, a king!"

"Let none call him a Suta again!
Let none defile his name!

For in this hall of warriors,
Valor is honored, not blood!"

The duel began—at last, my moment had come.
"Duryodhana, stand by me!"
"Savdhan, Arjuna—brace yourself!"
"O Radha’s son, grant me strength!"

Arrows upon arrows rained from our bows,
Varunastra met Agneyastra in fierce collision.
Weapons clashed,
Thunder echoed in the heavens,
For the battle was fierce,
For it was Karna and Arjuna,
Locked in a war of equals.

The bowstrings sang,
The air burned with power,
So fierce was the duel,
That it had to be stopped.
No victor could be named,
No supreme warrior declared.

But today, Radhéya stood fulfilled—
For Duryodhana’s friendship had given him honor.

Yet, amidst the roaring acclaim,
One moment stood frozen in silence—
Rajmata Kunti had collapsed,
Fainting upon the court’s cold floor.

None could tell why.
Was it sorrow? Was it disbelief?
Did she falter at my honor?
Or was there a deeper truth,
One yet to be revealed...?

Defeat of *Jarasandha*

The full moon, round like a golden urn,
Gazed at me with an unwavering stern.

As if *Jarasandha* himself on this land,
Stood with a challenge, firm and grand.

I heard a tale, an eerie lore,
A demon had stitched him back once more.
Strength and wisdom, she held so vast,
Bound him together with magic cast.

"Karna, my friend, today you fight!
Break his pride, end his might.
Jarasandha calls himself a king,
But you, Rādheya, bear a greater sting!

When the duel begins, you'll see,
He shall behold the sun in thee!
Come, let us set forth this night,
And claim victory with fearless might."

With Shakuni, Duryodhana bold,
Dushasana too, as tales are told,
We rode to Magadha's grand domain,
Where power and magic fiercely reign.

"Is he a demon?" I mused, unsure,
"Is his craft divine, obscure?"
Lost in thought, I heard a jest,
Duryodhana's hand upon my chest—

"Karna, what weighs on your mind?
Why this worry? Leave it behind!"

"Nothing, my friend, just drawing my plan."
"Let it be, Karna, behold the fans!
The women of Magadha, young and fair,
Admire your form, your golden glare.
Like autumn's moon, your beauty glows,
And with your strength, like gold, it shows."

In Magadha's halls, they feasted well,
With royal grace, their courtesies fell.
Our plea we placed before their king,
But he refused, with pride to cling—

"Never! I shall never bow!
Nor before Duryodhana allow!"

"Then raise the ground, prepare the sand,
Let strength decide, not demand!
Let the tigers clash in rage,
And see who truly owns the stage!"

With mighty roars, like elephants wild,
We charged ahead, fierce and riled.
Jarasandha, now, began to wane,
As if he touched the scorching flame.

One blink—and his arm went weak,
His breath turned shallow, his will grew meek.
The Magadha king now groaned in pain,
Fell to his knees, his pride now slain.

"Forgive me, O Angaraj,
Your divine fire I failed to gauge.
I see your might, your truth, your name,
I bow to thee—I lose this game."

Ashwatthama's Words...

Truly, he was unlike any other,
With sapphire eyes and a dot like thunder.

A body firm as an ironwood tree,
Like a grand temple by the sea.

His stride like the towering peaks so vast,
Yet dreams of his were shattered fast.
Still, he stood strong, like a mighty rock,
But his wrath coiled—like a serpent's lock.

His broad forehead bore the sun's bright mark,
His ears scented sweet, like flowers in the dark.
His back was vast as the cosmic shell,
His sharp, straight nose—like a chiseled spell.

No crown was needed upon his head,
For golden curls like flames had spread.
His skin was gold, his glow was bright,
Like molten metal, bathed in light.

A shield unpierced, his earrings shone,
The world knew him as *Karna* alone.
In the school of war, beneath the sky,
We were mere stars—he shone high.

With the sun's glare, his eyes would gleam,
His gait like elephants, proud and supreme.
His piercing gaze, a warrior's lore,
A presence none could ignore.

Before Karna, all seemed small,
His spirit vast, his greatness tall.
Yet how did he forsake his shield and gold?
Who was Karna—what tale untold?

The Panchala Expedition

Truly, I am fortunate indeed,
For in Karna, I own a mine of greed.
But how naïve my Karna stands,
While every maiden craves his hand.

Did not grandsire seize Kashi's queen?
Then why should Karna's fate be lean?
Grandsire's master was no less bold,
With Karna's vow, the tale unfolds.

The maidens of Panchala gather near,
Their eyes on Karna, bright and clear.
Yet whispers rise, a tale untold,
A murmur strange, a vision bold.

"As rare as Karna, fierce and bright,
Yajnaseni gleams in equal light."

Her beauty scattered, a cosmic dance,
Like stars adrift in heaven's expanse.
Oh, what a sight my fate shall be—
With Karna's shield, she stands by me!

They call her nature's fragrant bloom,
But Karna, too, is fate's own boon.

From far and wide, the royals came,
The cowherd too, with eyes aflame.
A wrath unseen, yet known to me,
Like fire, he hides his mystery.

They say he shifts in form and guise,
His many shades deceive the eyes.
His feats confuse, his ties unknown,
A cousin's bond, yet never shown.

Akrura, Shishupala stood,
Jarasandha too, among the brood.
But Karna, lost in silent gaze,
Upon Krishna's feet, in mystic haze.

Why stare upon that sorcerer's feet?
Draupadi enters, grace replete.

Her presence, like the creamy crest,
Upon the milk that shines the best.
Dhrishtadyumna raised his call,
And half the court stood in a thrall—

"Pierce the fish within the stream,
Aim your mark, fulfill the dream."

The archer's strain, the warrior's mark,
A test as bold as Shiva's spark.
Draupadi's will—so fierce, so grand,
Yet false to those who bear the brand.

Shall I bend my cause for love?
Panchali's fate with Karna is wove.

Like Uma bound to Shankar's side,
With Karna, Draupadi shall abide.
He shall strike the fish with ease,
And claim Panchala's throne in peace.

And after conquest, in victory bright,
Anga's queen shall rise in might.
With Champa's halls in triumph soar,
While Hastinapura rules once more.

Lost in thought, my gaze did roam,
To see the contest shake the throne.
But not a bow could move an inch,
The halls of kings did pale and flinch.

Jarasandha, proud and high,
Stepped forth to claim the bow's reply.
Yet sacred wood defied his hold,
And crushed his chest in fury bold.

Like a beast within a snare,
He gasped, entrapped in deep despair.
The court erupted, mocking bright,
Drowning him in jeers and spite.

Yet Karna stood, so firm, so still,
Lost in Krishna's feet at will.

Sakha and Sakhi...

Draupadi speaks:

Sakha,
Angaraj—he is a warrior divine,
Among great charioteers, his strength does shine.
He alone has raised the bow,
While the others faltered, trembling low.

No man in Aryavarta compares,
No arms as mighty—none so rare.
I heard Shikhandi's whispered word,
A fleeting doubt within me stirred.

"Is he truly such a force?
Does Angaraj hold fate's course?"

Sakhi,
Wild weeds thrive in fertile ground,
But lotuses bloom in the mud profound.
Destiny knows what must unfold,
Let us wait—let truth be told.

The sun needs no name to shine,
The lotus grows without a sign.
Yet,
The moon lends beauty to the sky,
The bow resounds as arrows fly.

For purity, an offering must be made,
For humanity, a sacrifice laid.
Life's golden balance is not so plain,
A tiger's blood is never slain.

When lightning roars, the moon will hide,
To honor the storm, it steps aside.
A moment's play—yet in the end,
True pride and glory shall ascend.

The bravest men are born for deeds,
Not all who roam the woods are beasts.
Among them few as lions rise,
And wield the bow with fearless might.

In Aryavarta, there stand but two—
Karna, and one whose strength is true.
Angaraj Karna, this truth is pure,
Yet, friend, his ties endure.

He walks with Duryodhana's fate,
A ruler cruel, consumed by hate.
A king whose hands have fed the fire,
Whose thirst for power knows no higher.

Karna—a Sutaputra, yes, it's so,
Yet mighty enough to pierce the bow.
He could win me, this I see,
Our match—a perfect destiny.

Like gold and sandalwood entwined,
His soul and mine in union bind.
Yet friend, some paths must not be tread,
Some bonds to fate must not be wed.

For wisdom calls for sacrifice,
And self must yield to duty’s price.
O Keshava, your hint is clear,
I leave behind my selfish sphere.

The Mighty One...

Is there no warrior left on this land?
No true-born hero to take a stand?
The fire within me flared so high,
To prove the power of the Kuru line.

Moments passed as my arms swelled tight,
Training with the mace had honed my might.
I whispered to myself, **“At least I’ll try,**
To lift this bow and reach the sky.”

In my heart, I called to my lord,
To Balrama, my guiding sword.
Determined, firm, I made my stand,
To raise the bow with my own hand.

Jarāsandha turned with desperate eyes,
But with one swift pull—I raised it high!
The hall then roared with wild applause,
"Victory to Yuvraj Duryodhana!"

For Jarāsandha, life was spared,
Yet in that moment, fate prepared.
The bow fell crashing at my feet,
A moment tragic, yet complete.

I had not thought, nor had I planned,
Laughter echoed through the stand.
The courtiers clapped, the jest was loud,
A sea of mirth among the crowd.

None could bear the bow’s great weight,
None could stand against its fate.

Karna’s gaze, unwavering, still,
Fixed upon Krishna’s feet at will.
And when the Lord’s toe gently stirred,
Karna smiled—his heart assured.

Courage filled his mighty chest,
With charming grace, he rose—possessed.
His upper robe, in swift command,
Was pulled with force by his strong hand.

In his eyes, a question burned,
"Why, my King, have you ever frightened?"

With one firm grasp, the bow was raised,
The court stood still—awed and amazed.
To Shiva’s bow, his homage fell,
And chants of *Sādhu!* filled the hall as well.

Friend...

Who truly was Karna, I wonder still,
A thought that shakes my mind at will.
Memories flash, thoughts take flight,
Defeat was mine, yet he saved me outright.

The first time Karna met Panchali,
A gathering of warriors, proud and free.
The stage was set for the mighty best,
Yet Karna stood above the rest.

Drupada's vow was clear and stern,
No honor was Karna's to earn.
Yet, he never forgot his worth,
Nor the pride of his noble birth.

I, too, had tried with all my might,
But divine arms seek divine light.
Only a chosen one could bend that bow,
Only the strongest could make it so.

How cunning I was, I now confess,
Tangled in beauty's cruel finesse.
Panchali's grace, her sacred charm,
Karna could've won her with one swift arm.

The bow that kings and warriors failed,
In Karna's grip had gently wailed.
With lion's stride, his stance so grand,
He moved like fire across the land.

The moment he set his arrow right,
Panchali's face betrayed her fright.
That golden glow, his jeweled crest,
His aura shone above the rest.

Then from behind, a voice arose,
Drupada's daughter, bold and close.
Her words like arrows struck too deep,
A wound that fate had sworn to keep.

"I am a princess, born so high,
Not meant for a charioteer's sigh.
A man who tames the royal steeds,
Knows not the grace of noble creeds.

Why have you come to this sacred hall?
You bear no lineage, none at all!
A Kshatriya's bride, I am to be,
Not one of nameless destiny."

The hall fell silent, hearts grew sore,
Karna's honor, struck to the core.
A disciple of Parashurama great,
Yet now he stood to mockery's fate.

His sapphire eyes turned fierce,
Words of truth began to pierce—

“O haughty woman, blind with pride,
A poisoned weed in fields so wide.
The lotus blooms in the murkiest clay,
Yet you curse the soil that gave you way?

Only three days past, you were born anew,
And caste’s whole meaning is clear to you?
But what of justice? What of fate?
Or does nobility breed just hate?”

With fury bright, his voice did rise,
A tempest swirled within his eyes—

“When the battlefield calls my name,
This ‘charioteer’s son’ shall stake his claim.
One day, O princess, time will teach,
The price of pride you chose to preach.

For now, the bow I leave behind,
Your scorn, O queen, I’ll keep in mind.”

The lion, humbled, turned away,
The silent echoes marked the day.
In Karna’s rage, even his robe,
Seemed to burn in its heavy fold.

Panchali’s words had cut so deep,
A wound too vast for time to keep.
My heart too, ached in despair,
For Karna’s sorrow was too great to bear.

As I walked away in muted dread,
Five humble Brahmins stood ahead.
A thought did cross my troubled mind—
Were these the brothers fate designed?

And then, before my very sight,
A dark-skinned Brahmin took his flight.
With graceful aim and steady hand,
He struck the mark, just as planned.

It was Arjuna—without a doubt,
And all the court began to shout.
The princess, blind to worth so vast,
Chose him, and left Karna in the past.

Today, her victory stands so tall,
Yet Karna, my brother, bore the fall.
A man of strength, left to disdain,
While pride and fate both laughed in vain.

Vrushali...

To receive an urn of nectar, yet keep it whole,
Is as rare as love in a warrior's soul.
The gentle waves of Champa's land,
Yet a woman's fate—embers in hand.

The wild winds of Anga roar and rage,
But a virtuous husband is heaven's sage.
At first, I knew not his might,
Yet his rugged grace soon came to light.

Those deep blue eyes, calm yet bold,
Set my heart in an untamed hold.
A glance at him, my world was spun,
My bashful soul knew not what was done.

Forgive me, O Goddess divine,
A mistake was mine, a fault, a sign.
How innocent his heart, how pure his gaze,
Between us, an unspoken phase.

Youth—like spring in its lively bloom,
And he, a warrior in nature's womb.
Curls of hair, a mighty brow,
A love unknown began to grow.

He spoke, "I am Vasusen Karna," proud,
Forgive me, O Goddess, he bowed.
Eyes lowered, lost in the land,
Perhaps he too felt fate's command.

Why, I know not, words stood still,
Even my friends could not bend my will.
We rushed away, our steps in haste,
Yet I was lost in love's embrace.

Then fortune bloomed before my eyes,
A joy so vast, it touched the skies.
A restless heart, a galloping steed,
A fearless glance to know my need.

He lifted the shattered piece I broke,
My happiness soared with every stroke.
What was this stir, this unknown thread,
That tied my soul where my fears had fled?

At dawn, beside the sacred stream,
I carried my urn, lost in a dream.
Yet fate had set its cunning snare,
I stumbled deep, gasping for air.

Breathless struggle, vision dim,
Darkness danced on water's brim.
And then from nowhere, fierce and bright,
A warrior of unyielding might.

No strength to hold, no voice to call,
Yet in his arms, I let myself fall.
From depths below to shores so high,
He rose with me, unwavering sky.

Gasping, drowning, near my end,
Yet he had will enough to fend.
His arms were firm, his eyes were fire,
He bore my weight, yet never tired.

As I awoke in trembling grace,
Shame and blush adorned my face.
It was him—my Karna, proud and strong,
A warrior of fate, where I belong.

"O Goddess, why risk your breath so free?"
He asked, his voice a melody.
I cared not for words, nor fear, nor past,
I had found my fate at last.

As I stood, my hands still shook,
A sacred token in his look.
A royal man, of noble line,
Yet dressed in the sun’s own shine.

Struck by awe, I held my breath,
For fate had woven love and death.
Bound in vows of sacred tie,
Under destiny’s watchful eye.

A husband rare, I knew it true,
For such a man, the heavens knew.
And yet, his heart to wounds was chained,
A fate unjust, a love profaned.

The blue robe gifted by a queen,
Held his gaze—a solemn sheen.
Each moment with him, a golden ray,
A love untold in time’s own way.

A man who saved what once was lost,
Who held my ruin, no matter the cost.
Why was he wronged? Let gods explain,
For Panchali’s mind was dull and vain.

Yet even then, he bore no spite,
Nor raised his hand in vengeful fight.
Had she deserved a warrior's grace?
A heart like hers—so cold, so base.

If only then he'd claimed his right,
Bound her chains, proved his might.
But even in pain, his honor stood tall,
To him alone, the world did fall.

For on this earth, among the true,
None shone brighter than him—than you.

Partha, Karna is the Greatest…

Partha

enough of *Karna's* praise, O *Keshava,* cease this song!
Why glorify a charioteer's son? Our foe, he stands so strong.
The friend of Duryodhana—a sinner indeed,
How can a man of dharma in him take seed?

How can he match the five of us in might?
A crowned king, yet bereft of light.
Like Duryodhana, he too was crowned,
Yet his wisdom in dharma was never found.

Keshava, I seek an explanation,
I want true proof, no mere narration.
Prove his greatness, if you must,
Then I shall yield—my sword shall rust.

Yadunandan smirked, so calm, so wise,

Keshava

"Partha, your arrogance still does not subside!
Not every man on the unrighteous side
Is sinful—some are fate's denied.

Even the serpent in Shiva's embrace,
Bears purity despite its place.
Duryodhana aims to crush mankind,
Yet Karna's honor is pure, refined.

Remember, Partha, his armor divine,
Not even I have such a sign.
Like his sapphire eyes, like his golden teeth,
He bears a fate that's buried deep.

The sun has been his only guide,
His hand in charity—open, wide.
As I was raised in a humble shed,
So too in stables, he was bred.

You were born a prince, nurtured in light,
Yet a Dalit upheld knowledge's might!
Partha, I shall prove you wrong,
A moment's test won't take too long!"

Hari roared—a thunderous cry,
The world stretched vast before Arjuna's eye.
Mountains stood—majestic gold,
Then vanished fast, a sight untold.

"Wait but a moment, Partha dear,
I summon Karna—see and hear."

Moments passed, the test was near,
Radhéya came with a smile sincere.

There stood Arjuna, watching keen,
As Krishna spoke, his gaze serene:

"Karna, a simple task for you,
A favor now I ask of you.
Behold these golden hills afar,
Divide their worth, and be their star.

A share for each, a fair decree,
A gift of gold in charity.
None shall leave in thirst or need,
Each shall take their rightful seed."

"Thousands now shall stand in line,
Half to Arjuna, half to thine.
First, Partha, begin the deed,
Decide the share for those in need."

Arjuna called them, one by one,
A hundred coins for each was done.
Then came Karna's turn to give,
A moment all would not forget or forgive.

A single phrase, so clear, so bright,
"Take it all—it is your right!"
No count, no gaze, no second thought,
The golden peak, he simply forgot.

Arjuna watched in silent daze,
His mind entranced, his heart amazed.
What was this act, this deed so grand,
A lesson deep, a truth firsthand?

Shri Krishna spoke with knowing eyes,
"Partha, now do you realize?
You measured need—you thought it wise,
Yet in your heart, greed still lies.

You weighed and measured, mind confined,
But Karna gave with soul unlined.
For you, gold held worth untold,
For him, just charity's embrace was gold.

Partha, Karna is the greatest one,
Beyond his gift, no virtue shone!"

Guru Parashurama…

Bhargava was unlike the rest,
His punishments were shaped with zest.
His control over youth was grand,
Yet discipline he did demand.

"If my disciple ever falls astray,
A penance he must duly pay.
Yet his eager face, serene and bright,
Brought back my zeal, my guiding light.

His soul held a fire untold,
A mastery of archery, fierce and bold.
Greater than knowledge, which virtue stands?
Is purity not drawn from impure sands?

Only in fire do diamonds shine,
Only in darkness does the hero refine!"

Speaking thus, Bhargava smiled,
His disciple's words, so pure, so mild.

"*Gurudev,* I shall be the sun of the land,
A war trumpet in my hand.
I shall shake the stars and moon,
With my might, my strength, my boon!

Let my arms bend the Himalayan peak,
Let my sword's edge never grow weak.
I shall dance on flames, unfazed,
Turn the impossible into praise!

Like you, my name shall rise,
With honor pure, without disguise.
In war, I shall be just and true,
Never shall I let adharma accrue.

For strength lies within one's soul,
Not in one's name, nor birth's control."

Bhargava, lost in his disciple's words,
Felt *Karna's* spirit soar like birds.
Deep in sleep, his trust so wide,
Karna lay, close to his side.

A sudden gasp, a shocking sight,
Blood poured forth in morning's light.

"Shiva! Shiva!" the master cried,
"*Karna,* what is this, speak—decide!"
His forehead creased in worried frown,
As blood like a river gushed down.

"Forgive me, *Achary*a, hear me well,
Your sleep was deep, in peaceful spell.

A worm had burrowed through my thigh,
Yet I did not stir, nor did I cry.

How could I wake you, Master dear?
Not for my pain, nor for my fear!"

"Such courage? How can it be?
A *Brahmin* lad—you do not seem to me!
Tell me now, no lies, no more—
Reveal your truth, your house, your lore!"

Karna fell, his face turned grim,
His voice was choked, his sight grew dim.

"*Acharya,* punish me, but first,
Let me speak, relieve this thirst.
I am *Radhéya, Sutaputra's* son,
A seeker of knowledge, a chosen one.

Never have I sought gain nor throne,
Only wisdom, to call my own.
By birth, I was denied my right,
Yet I dreamt of standing in warrior's light.

My father, *Adhiratha,* so kind, so grand,
Raised me with love, with guiding hand.
My mother, *Radhai,* proud and pure,
Gave me a strength forever sure.

O Bhargava, I hold no hate,
But my fate was sealed by caste and state.
My birth was not my choice, nor call,
Yet I stand with honor tall!"

Parashurama, his wrath now high,
Yet his heart heaved a solemn sigh.

"*Karna,* you deceived me well,
For that, a curse shall on you dwell.
Forget the *Brahmastr*a when you must fight,
Yet let this truth be known in light—

Your devotion moves my very soul,
Your faith shall make your legend whole.
Though *Brahmastra* shall not be in your hold,
I grant you *Vijaya* bow and *Bhargavastra,* pure as gold!

Wherever you stand, victory shall rise,
Your name shall echo through the skies.

Generations shall remember thy,
For *Karn*a, thou art ***Mrityunjay***!"

Sandalwood Offering

Keshava,
How is Karna righteous, say?
To me, he seems but proud—his way!

I know your wisdom shines so bright,
Like blazing fire, a guiding light.
Your words, O king, are never vain,
You stand as truth's eternal flame.

Yet tell me, why, O Keshava,
Does Karna find a place in thee?
In wisdom and in charity,
How can he match the noble three?

Show me proof, O Madhava,
My eagerness now grows anew!
How does he match Dharma's sons?
How does he shine in virtue true?

Krishna speaks:
Arjuna, hear! Karna stands,
A force of war with mighty hands.
On spring's full moon, in battle's rage,
He roared like beasts freed from a cage.

His strength is vast, unshaken, grand,
A warrior none could reprimand.
His radiant armor glows so bright,
As if outshining cosmic light.

Golden muscles, firm and bold,
Move like waves, a tale retold.
A forehead marked with solar grace,
His warrior's sign—none can replace.

Azure eyes, his soul's deep art,
With birth-blessed shield, he stands apart.
A sculptor's touch, divine and rare,
None can match his warrior's flair.

His righteousness flows far and wide,
A saintly spark in him resides.
He is the one, the generous heart,
The Radhé prince, who stands apart.

Yet Arjuna shook his head in doubt,
His heart still clouded, restless, loud.
"Where is proof?" he asked the Lord,
"Why grant this Sutaputra accord?"

"A braggart who but boasts in vain,
Lifts a horse's filth, insane!
How can he be dharmic, pure?
A vessel filled with vice obscure?"

A knowing smile then graced the Lord,
And Krishna’s words did strike a chord:
"Arjuna, let your doubt subside,
Come, I shall test him by your side!"

"Go now, don the robes of sage,
To Anga’s land, let truth engage.
Mock him not in blind disdain,
Lest later you may weep in pain."

To Yudhishthira first they went,
Where royal grace on them was spent.
The king did bow, his hands were raised,
In honor deep, the guests were praised.

But Krishna played his mystic hand,
And storm clouds burst across the land.
Thunder raged and torrents poured,
Lightning struck as heavens roared.

A solemn voice then filled the air:
"For sacred rites, dry wood is rare.
We seek the sandal’s scented grace,
To light the fire with holy trace."

The king then called his men to task,
Yet time had passed, the rain held fast.
At last, the mighty ruler sighed,
His will and charity denied.

"Pardon me, O sages high,
This gift, today, I can’t supply."
A smirk then danced on Krishna’s face,
"Then come, Arjuna, let’s leave this place!"

Now towards Anga’s land they went,
Disguised, their noble footsteps bent.
Karna saw them, bowed in grace,
And led them in with king’s embrace.

"What do you seek, O sages wise?
Gold, or land, or gems as prize?
Cows or silver, name it true,
Whatever you ask, I shall bestow you."

"Not wealth, nor gold, nor worldly charm,
We seek a gift of deeper calm.
Dry sandalwood, that’s our plea,
Yet rain still falls, wild and free."

"Only dry wood lights the pyre,
For rituals pure and sacred fire.
O noble king, we heard of thee,
A donor great—now let us see!"

With steady voice, the challenge set,
Arjuna stood in silent bet.
For Karna’s brow, once grand and high,
Now bore a crease, a silent sigh.

The forest drenched, the trees were wet,
Where would he find dry wood to get?

Then Karna rose, his sword in hand,
And turned to doors both tall and grand.
With fearless strokes, he carved and tore,
His palace gates, his chamber doors.

In moments stood a heap so vast,
Of sandalwood, all cut and cast.
Krishna smiled, as Arjuna paled,
His heart in guilt, in sorrow veiled.

"O sages, forgive my slight delay,
My duty stands, come take your way!"

Karna bowed, his voice so bright,
A heart that glowed in giving’s light.
Krishna’s heart, now full, did melt,
And shame in Arjuna deep was felt.

"O Anga’s king, today I see,
True charity, unmatched and free!"

With blessings high, they raised their hand,
"May such a giver grace this land!"

A mighty cry then filled the air,
"Victory to Karna, just and fair!"

"O Partha, now do you see?
None need explain his charity.
Though Yudhishthira's halls may shine,
Karna’s will is more divine!"

"For virtue, one must have the might,
To act with faith, to stand for right.
The Pandavas are great indeed,
Yet Karna’s heart outgrows their deed."

Thus Krishna spoke, his voice serene,
And Arjuna bowed, his pride unseen.
"Forgive me, Lord, my mind was vain,
For now, I know Karna’s reign.

Through wealth and power, I did grow blind,
But he, in rags, still shone refined.
O Madhava, you spoke the truth,
Karna alone is virtue’s root!"

Memory...

Memory speaks, memory calls,
A curse it seems, echoing all.
What sin was sown in lives before?
The weight of past still shakes my core.

Even today, thoughts make me weak,
A shifting view, a mind unique.
That day still lingers in my mind,
A bitter truth I cannot unwind.

"A wondrous son! A child divine!"
Their voices rang, their eyes did shine.
Yet I feared, with joy so slight,
Would punishment come, a fate so tight?

With folded hands, she begged them true,
Never thought they'd shun me too.
"Saintly child, so pure, so bright,
Yet in royal form, a warrior's might!"

"Strong like an elephant, firm in stance,
A prince, you seem, at every glance.
A love for archery in your eyes,
A fate no common soul belies!"

Golden earrings, a shield so grand,
A mighty warrior born to stand.
Your presence shines, so fierce and stern—
Ah! Now I know, your name is Karna!"

The teacher blessed, his heart so light,
My soul found peace in wisdom's sight.
To learn, to grow, my deepest will,
To test my strength, to hone my skill.

"O learned one, so great, so wise,
Your fame spreads vast beneath these skies.
Make me your disciple now,
I shall uphold your name, my vow!"

"Test me, judge me, make me strive,
In debt to you, I shall survive!
No fear, no doubt, no backward glance,
Through devotion, I'll enhance!"

"I am Karna, son of the charioteer,
A Sutaputra, proud and clear.
Yet knowledge seeks no caste or name,
My thirst for learning burns the same!"

But then his face turned cold and grim,
A sneer, a shadow darkened him.
"A Sutaputra? A stable hand?
A lowborn soul from a nameless land?"

"You dare to dream of warrior’s might?
To wield a bow, to stand in fight?
A Brahmin’s wisdom you desire?
Foolish child, your hopes expire!"

"Sutras, Dalits—born to serve,
To drive the chariots, never swerve.
Kings shall rule, and Brahmins teach,
Merchants trade, as customs preach!"

"You are filth, the lowest race,
In my mind, you hold no place!"

"Beware, O teacher, heed my word,
Why was Eklavya denied and hurt?"
Now I see, I understand,
The weight of bias in your hand.

"Once you say, 'Brahmins must teach,'
Yet scorn me when I seek to reach.
If power rests in caste alone,
Then truth itself is overthrown!"

"If Brahmins teach, by what decree
Did Parshuram break that legacy?"
In fertile fields, wild plants may grow,
Yet lotus blooms in mud below.
A prince needs titles, wealth, and land—
But beauty needs no guiding hand!

"Your thoughts, O sage, are narrow still,
My strength, my focus, shape my will.
I do not hide, I do not kneel,
A Sutaputra—I wear with zeal!"

"It’s minds like yours that taint this earth,
That shun true strength, deny its birth.
A world where pride alone prevails,
Will crumble when its lies unveil!"

"Do not mock me, do not chide,
Where stands Arjuna, I shall stride!
One day, the world will know my name,
A warrior fierce, a soul untamed!"

"When the battlefield glows with fire,
Your arrogance will soon retire.
My strength shall shape my destiny,
Though you deny, my fate is free!"

"You refuse today, you cast me low,
Yet in the future, truth shall glow!
Through might, through skill, through endless fight,
I'll carve my path, I'll claim my right!"

"O teacher, watch, for time shall tell,
Karna will rise, will fight, will swell!
Denied today, yet bright will burn,
The legend of Radhé Karna's turn!"

A Grand Gift in Drupada's Fate

A grand gift fell into Drupada's fate,
A beauty so rare, beyond debate.
Apsaras' grace would pale and fade,
Her splendor left words abridged and frayed.

From the blazing fire’s sacred core,
A divine ember, pure and pure.
Yet how could such dusky skin
Hold beauty that none could pin?

A scent of kevda, rich and rare,
A Krishna-like hue beyond compare.
Eyes like a goddess, soft and bright,
A sculpted nose, carved just right.

Her playful locks in waves did dance,
Each motion held a charming trance.
Her brows, so shaped, four fingers wide,
A frame so fine, with grace as guide.

Her hands, like lotus petals fair,
A goddess’ glow danced in her air.
With every step, a sway so grand,
That put divine maidens to remand.

Kevda’s fragrance was her gift,
Yet her dusk-like shade would often shift.
The jewels she wore, her golden grace,
Still paled before her radiant face.

The Game of Fate

Life is but helplessness,
No tender grace, only vice—dust to dust,
Bound within limits, a fiery must.

Duryodhana, my dearest friend,
Devised his plans till the very end.
Shakuni, cunning as ever, schemed—
A downfall for the Pandavas, he deemed.

Fortune never rests its gaze,
While demons prowl in endless craze.
Righteous men, like Yudhishthir bright,
Bear the burden of a just man's might.

Yet fate rolled forth its cruel hand,
And he embraced the gamble grand.
Into the burning pyre he leaped,
Yet life, relentless, still he keeps.

The blind king’s heart—oh, full of lies!
Yet within my soul, a turmoil lies.
What of Queen Kunti’s fate?
Where shall she go, lost and desolate?

When doom upon mankind calls,
Wisdom flees, and reason falls.
Drunken horses, maddened tusks,
A reckless prince—his kingdom husks.

Indraprastha’s wounds, still fresh,
Duryodhana’s heart does enmesh.
Even Yudhishthir, noble and grand,
Knows defeat waits at fate’s command.

Gandhar’s king—one truth remains:
The dice he rolls hold bones, not grains.

That fateful day at last arrived,
The board was laid, the hall alive.
Legends, warriors, sages wise,
Gathered round with piercing eyes.

Drona, Kripa, the grandsire proud,
Dhritarashtra sat among the crowd.
Deceitful Shakuni, cunning and sly,
Rolled the dice as fate passed by.

The echoes rang, the game was cast,
With each turn, his hopes fell fast.

“Speak, O King, what will you stake?
Gold, silver, gems—what shall we take?”

A stench of treachery filled the air,
A test of honor, a game unfair.
"To gamble, a Kshatriya must,
Till all is lost, till fate turns dust."

Thus spoke the righteous, foolish man,
And pledged to play till all began to fade.

Gold to dust, silver to ash,
The empire lost in fortune’s clash.
Horses, armies, elephants bold,
All were gambled, all were sold.

Yet still, he played—unshaken, cold,
His pride unbent, his reason blind.

"I stake my kingdom!" he declared,
And fate stood still, no mercy spared.
Shakuni laughed, Duryodhana smiled,
The dice rolled forth—a fate reviled.

The game was lost, the gods stood mute,
A king had fallen to vice’s root.

But lo, his madness knew no end,
Even brothers now he dared to spend.
With each loss, their fate was sealed,
Dishonor bloomed upon the field.

The mighty house of Kuru fell,
Their glory now a hollow shell.

Duryodhana roared, his laughter vile,
As Pandavas stood, stripped of guile.
"Your brothers are now my slaves,
Bound by fate, cursed by waves."

"Arjuna, kneel before your king!
Remove your jewels, bare your skin.
Hand your bow to mighty Karn,
For now, you serve, your fate is sworn."

Bheema seethed, his rage untamed,
But silence reigned, their strength now maimed.

A greater horror still remained,
Draupadi’s fate—a curse ordained.

How was she staked, this noble queen?
A wager played, so vile, obscene.
No voice dared speak, no hand arose,
As honor burned, as shame enclosed.

Duryodhana’s eyes, ablaze with lust,
Signaled forth, a fate unjust.
"Bring her here!" he gave command,
And fate obeyed his ruthless hand.

Karna, I rose—"Enough, my friend!
Hold your tongue, do not descend.
A man must learn his place to keep,
A king his vow, though fate be steep!"

Duryodhana laughed, my words fell weak,
A sinner’s game, a justice bleak.

The doors burst wide, she stumbled in,
Dragged through halls, her cries ran thin.
A trembling plea, a desperate wail,
Echoed deep within the veil.

"Help me, save me!" she cried in vain,
But silence reigned, none broke the chain.

Torn from grace, her fate was sealed,
A princess lost, a queen revealed.

Her fragrance drowned in filth and dust,
As laughter filled the air of lust.

A crimson haze, a wicked glare,
Her fate was tossed in cruel despair.

Vidura wept, Vikarna raged,
Yet still, no power could disengage.

Hands unclean, a crime untold,
As history watched its tale unfold.

Tears of shame, a broken cry,
A cruel jest beneath the sky.

And so, she stood, a prey alone,
As hands defiled a queen’s own throne.

Yet lo! The air—it shifted strange,
A power vast began to change.

The silken folds, they never ceased,
An endless cloth, a holy fleece.

Her cries rose high, her voice so bold,
As fate itself began to fold.

A golden hue, a fabric bright,
Unfurling cloth, a blinding light.

Duryodhana, struck with fear,
Stepped back as truth drew near.

Bheema roared, his oath now sworn,
A day would come when blood be torn.

The war was set, the die was cast,
A future writ in echoes past.

Draupadi wept, her cries in vain,
Yet destiny wove a path of pain.

And thus, the court fell cold and bare,
A silent witness to despair.

A kingdom doomed, a tale retold,
Of greed and fate, of hearts grown cold.

A war was forged in fire and shame,
As history etched its cursed name.

If She Were Vrushali?

A serpent of sorrow sheds its skin,
As the dark tale haunts my mind within.

The shameful echoes of that cursed hall,
Return to me, refusing to fall.

My Vrushali—golden, bright,
Outshining even the scented night.
Yet there she stood, not she—but **her**,
A queen disgraced in cruel slur.

Had it been Vrushali there,
Would my words still stain the air?
Would I have called **her** vile,
Branded her in shameful guile?

No! How could I think so low?
How could my strength dissolve and go?
My arm, once fierce, now bends in vain,
Karna—the thoughtless, drenched in stain.

Why did I, in blinded pride,
Cast my honor—cast it aside?
Like the Himalayas stood my grace,
Yet fell today in deep disgrace.

Why, oh why, did I betray,
And mock her in such a way?

Digvijay..

They left, breaking my spirit,
Abandoning all their royal splendor.

Yet I was the one left confined,
Trapped in a cage of my own mind.
Despair was unlike ever before,
And everything felt familiar, yet sore.

I had wronged the dusky Savitri,
Yet my heart revered the Queen.
How could I not?
Queen Kunti was the greatest warrior—
A mother who endured ceaseless sorrow,
Who watched her daughter-in-law fall,
And lost a kingdom in a reckless game.

A decade and a year had passed,
The Pandavas were long gone.
Yet the emptiness remained,
A silence that haunted my throne.

The biting cold of Kartika nights—
How did the Queen endure its wrath?
Did her frail hands tremble?
Did she shiver beneath her royal past?

My friends were sharpening their blades,
Preparing for the coming war.
Their arms, veins taut and raised,
Ready to strike, to settle the score.

Like a lion's unyielding mane,
I shall wear my crown with pride.
Soon, I shall claim my conquest,
And justify my cause worldwide.

I shall give a reason to the world,
A reason to Dronacharya,
A reason against this caste-bound fate,
A reason to shatter poverty's cage.

When a charioteer leads the warriors,
The world will see a shift—
A new dawn, a new fate,
A change too grand to resist.

The Queen should have been here today,
I long for her blessing's embrace.
My pulse now roars like thunder,
My mind is lost in time and space.

"The Pandavas are not sons of Pandu,
Yet neither are they children of sin.

Queen Kunti is no deceiver,
And the Pandavas… are more than five!"

Grandsire’s words now haunt my mind—
A burning thought, a question unkind.
Who is the sixth Pandava?
Why does his name remain confined?

Sleep had abandoned my restless soul,
No peace, no rest—just an empty hole.

The time had come to prove my worth,
To carve my loyalty in stone.
To crown Duryodhana emperor,
To make his power known.

Yet, as Ashwatthama spoke,
My thoughts crumbled like dust.
My philosophy blurred,
As fate whispered in mistrust.

Who is this sixth Pandava?
How does he stand?
Is he elder to them all?
Or younger—by destiny’s hand?

Karna…

Life is a lesson, and fate its script.
A flower is offered to the Lord,
Yet along with it, a worm is placed,
Unknowingly, in worship's bliss.

The sixth Pandava, if he exists,
Is unlike the five I know.
He must be something rare,
Something grand—a force untold.

More righteous than Yudhishthira,
Stronger than mighty Bhima,
A warrior bold enough to halt Arjuna,
A swordsman fierce beyond Nakula and Sahadeva.

Like a serpent cast into fire,
A turmoil raged within my chest.
"Could it be me?"
The thought surfaced, unexpressed.

No—Shon is my brother,
My reflection, my blood.

My mother is Radha,
My father—Adhiratha.

I am a Suta, not a prince,
Bound by fate’s decree.
Yet in my heart, in my soul,
A warrior longs to break free.

Vrusali—my solace, my peace,
A green meadow in my thorn-ridden life.
Every trait of a Suta I see within me,
Unchanged, untouched—etched deep inside.

The Roar of the Warrior
The wind-chaser’s mane raged high,
His fiery breath kissed the sky.
His steed was saddled, reins held tight—
He rode forth, ready for the fight.

The scepter of Kuru had to reign,
Across Aryavarta’s vast domain.
The feats of Bhishma must be surpassed,
A warrior's fate—unshaken, steadfast.

The sacred night of Chaturthi passed,
Plans were drawn, formations cast.
Cavalry, elephants, archers stood,
Destined to conquer, spill their blood.

Hastinapura's splendor would rise anew,
Victory’s path, I would pursue.
Eastward began my war-bound quest,
For Kuru’s glory, for conquest’s test.

Radha and Baba brimmed with pride,
Angaraj Karna—his name spread wide.
With teary eyes, Vrushali stood,
Her trembling hands upon my hood.

She kissed my forehead, pressed her palm,
A red tilak—a warrior’s charm.
"Be victorious, my lord," she prayed,
As Ashwatthama’s voice gently swayed.

"Take care, my friend," he softly said,
His dark eyes glistened, softly red.
Leaving Hastinapura behind,
The Ganges waves turned cold and unkind.

The eastern sky, firm in claim,

Trembled before my rising flame.

The king of Bhadrawati shivered in fear,
When whispers of my march grew near.
Tray after tray of gems and gold,
Were brought in haste, his fear untold.

Like a tiger's roar shakes the trees,
The east would tremble upon its knees.
Through Kampilya's gates we tread,
Where past insults filled my head.

A bitter wound, a scarring tale—
Draupadi's laughter, cold and pale.
Drupada would not bow nor bend,
His arrogance—I'd make it end.

A father's pride, a daughter's shame,
A warrior's wrath, a burning flame.
The battle horns let loose their cry,
Panchala's fate was sealed to die.

Through war cries and clashing steel,
Drishtadyumna stood in battle's wheel.
Bhima's son and Shatrunjaya roared,
Yet with my might, their hopes were floored.

Like a tempest set aflame,
Panchala's fields burned in my name.
Against my fury, none could stand—
A second sun had struck the land.

Elephants fell, their riders slain,
Drupada's arrogance left in pain.
He learned that day, beyond dispute—
What it meant to face a charioteer's brute.

Through frigid nights and ghostly plains,
I rode where no great king had reigned.
Crossing rivers, storming lands,
With fire and steel in my hands.

Kosala's warriors braced for war,
Against the might of Kurus afar.
Ayodhya stood, proud and tall,
A city blessed, yet doomed to fall.

A land once ruled by Rama's grace,
By Lakshman's valor, Sita's embrace.
A city of love, of sacrifice deep—

Now felt the echoes of marching feet.

Yet even as my conquest burned,
Before its gates, my heart had turned.
"Ayodhya has taught true sacrifice,"
I murmured, as my soul thought twice.

No chains, no swords would strike this land,
My victory lay in an open hand.
With honor, I raised their flag once more,
And let their kingdom be restored.

Across the cold and trembling streams,
Where Mithila stood in golden beams.
A land of kings, of Janaka's name,
A place where wisdom lit its flame.

Yet even they, in war's cruel tide,
Could not against my might abide.
As Janaka's sons lay in defeat,
Their golden gates bowed to my feet.

With every march, my legend grew,
From Kirata hills to Mithila's view.
Through seas and storms, to eastern ends,
Where warriors broke, where empires bent.

Vidarbha's prince, so proud and tall,
Was destined now, to taste the fall.
"Face me, Rukmi!"—my challenge cried,
Our swords clashed like the roaring tide.

He struck, but I struck harder still,
With boundless force, with iron will.
A snake ensnared, he gasped for breath,
And bowed before his rightful death.

From city to city, throne to throne,
My name like wildfire shone.
Through ancient lands, through distant waves,
Where kings once ruled but now were slaves.

As the golden east was finally mine,
I turned to face the western line.
"Tell Duryodhana, our fate is set—
The world is ours, in blood and sweat."

Yet in my heart, a whisper stayed,
A question deep, a truth delayed.
"Who am I, beyond this war?

Beyond these crowns, these battle scars?"

The answer lay in fate’s cruel song,
For Karna’s tale was deep and long.

His conquest grand, his might untamed,
Yet destiny had him forever chained.

The Conqueror’s Return
I laid siege to Shuktamati’s gates,
Where Shishupala’s son, fierce and bold,
Charged at me with fate untold.
For two long hours, the battle raged,
Until Chedi’s king lay still—
And at my name, the war drums thrilled.

As Phalguna’s moonlight waned,
Our path turned towards Kunti’s reign.
A battle fierce, yet something stirred—
A strange warmth in my heart was heard.

Kunti Bhoja met me with steel,
His sword clashed with burning zeal.
Yet through the fight, a whisper came,
A longing deep—I knew not its name.

In the rushing Ashwa river’s tide,
I waded deep, my thoughts untied.
For an hour, lost in its trance,
I watched my charioteer’s stance.

A bond so rare, so firm, so pure,
Like lotus roots in muddy moor.

This was the city of Kunti’s past,
And something drew me to its grasp.
But soon, Vind and Avind fell,
Avanti too, in silence knelt.

Sindhu offered no resistance,
Jayadratha had no chance of persistence.

Through Virata’s fields, I stormed ahead,
Stacking heads of foes like lead.
The Matsya land lay crushed in dust,
Their cattle driven back with us.
Their gems and treasures, rich and rare,
Sent to Hastinapura with royal care.

In Kulinda’s lands, we fought like beasts,

Where tigers roamed and war ne'er ceased.

Across the Chandra River’s gleam,
Madra stood with a warrior’s dream.
The Madra king, my blood had spurned,
A "charioteer’s son"—he sneered and turned.

My veins burned hot, my breath ran cold,
An anger deep, uncontrolled.
In moments swift, Shalya fell,
Struck and broken—tolling knell.

The Yavanas and the Barbaras kneeled,
Kambojas too, laid down their shields.
With no regret, we turned our course,
Northward, onward, without remorse.

Through Kashmir’s sacred, jeweled land,
Where wisdom bloomed, where sages stand.
On Tangana’s peaks, I took my stand—
For here, my conquest met its end.

Upon the Himalayan peaks so grand,
I worshipped Surya with uplifted hand.
A moment pure, a moment divine,
Where strength and soul at last aligned.

Through Haridwar’s holy gate,
I rode back home to claim my fate.
Yet at the city’s grand embrace,
Three alone stood in their place.

Three alone, to greet my name,
Three alone, to share my fame.

Duryodhana, my dearest friend,
Ashwatthama, strong till the end,
And Satyasen, my loyal kin—
Three brothers bound by fate within.

Duryodhana held me tight,
His voice thick with raw delight.
"Karna, my brother, strong and true,
This empire now belongs to you!
With every land beneath your reign,
The world will sing of your great name!"

A chariot grand, a royal parade,
A march in glory, a triumph displayed.
Yet as I stepped toward my ride,

A curious gap lay at its side.

"Five horses? But where’s the sixth?
Why does this space remain unmixed?
Why this void, this hollow space,
Amidst such grandeur, such regal grace?"

"This is tradition," they softly spoke,
"A custom, an unbroken yoke."

"Then let my steed take that place,
Fill this void, leave no trace!"

Windswept and proud, my stallion stood,
Mane flowing wild, in victory’s mood.

Yet through the cheers and joyous cries,
A thought arose, a strange disguise.
As I rode, I turned to see—
Vidura’s cottage, small and free.

And from its humble, sacred door,
She stood, in silence, nothing more.
Kunti’s gaze upon me lay,
Her hands upraised—a silent sway.

No words were spoken, yet I knew—
A blessing deep, a bond so true.
Through all my glory, all my pride,
A mother’s love still stood inside.

Vidura’s Counsel – The Message of Peace

The years of exile, the silent pain,
The final game of fate’s domain.

The Pandavas returned, their right to claim,
Seeking a home, a place, a name.

But Duryodhana, blind with greed,
Deaf to wisdom, consumed by need.
A fool, where conscience fades and dies,
For wealth alone commands his ties.

Then Krishna came, the envoy of peace,
Speaking words that sought release:
"Give them respect, or half, if need,
Give them honor, or half, indeed.
Forget the past, let wounds be mended,
Let harmony reign, let war be ended.
Let's live as one, share joy and bread,
Let old betrayals now be shed."

Forget the court, the taint, the shame,
Forget the insult, the burning blame.
Let Kurus rule, let peace reside,
Let Pandavas walk with equal pride.
For they, like you, bear Pandu's might,
Born of the Kuru tree's grand height.

Yet if this plea you still deny,
Then grant but five small lands to try.
Keep your kingdom, vast and grand,
All we seek is sacred land.

The Pandavas, content with grace,
Would never raise a hand in place.
But Duryodhana, poisoned, proud,
Spoke with venom, fierce and loud:

*"Pandavas claim the Kuru line?
Where is the proof, what right is thine?
Have you all forgotten well,
The sage's curse, the fate that fell?

If Pandu dared to break desire,
To touch a woman, to burn in fire,
Then how were these sons ever made?
A forest birth, a curse repaid.

The queen, your mother, bore this stain,
A sin she hid, a mark of pain.
One mother, many fathers told,
One wife, five husbands bold.

They lived in sin, yet laugh today,
And now they beg, they cry, they pray?
Let them leave, go where they may,
To jungle depths, far away!

No land, no dust, no steps to claim,
Not even space for shadows' name!

And Krishna—black magician, thou!
Tend to cows, stay out, stay now!
No king bows to thee in shame,
No traitor wins in war’s own game.
Deceitful cowherd, leave this place,
Or here I’ll chain thy humbled grace!"*

Duryodhana, his fury vast,
Laughed as thunder cracked at last.
His mocking robe, his striking sneer,
Cut the silence, sharp and clear.

But Krishna stood, his wrath untamed,
A storm arose as all was named:

*"You speak of sin, yet burn in vice,
You call for justice, yet roll the dice?
Did you not strike the house with flame?
Did you not curse the Pandavas' name?

A poisoned hall, a forest wild,
A mother torn, a kingdom riled.
Your uncle plots, your greed prevails,
Yet now you speak of holy tales?

Then wager all! Let dice decide!
If I should win, let fate abide.
Shall I stake Dwarka? You stake thine?
If you lose—will you repay in kind?

Would you steal a woman, drag her low?
Bear exile’s wound, feel torment’s blow?
Would you beg in rags, would you taste their shame?
Would you survive, stripped of name?"*

Thunder roared, his form arose,
A titan’s wrath, a warrior’s pose.
His breath could burn the world in flame,
His eyes could set the skies aflame.
His hands once raised a mountain tall,
His might had crushed the demons all.

*"I, who crushed Kamsa’s pride,
I, who split the seas so wide.
I, who bore the cosmic weight,
I, who laugh at death and fate.

I, who slew the demon vile,
I, who made the heavens smile.
I, who felled the Asura great,
I, who wield both love and hate.

I am the end, I am the start,
I am the one who rends apart.
I am the storm, the fire, the flood,
I am the wrath that burns in blood!

You have refused, you have denied,
Now death alone will stand beside.
The field shall burn, the vultures rise,
The soil shall drink from severed ties.

Prepare yourself, your fate is writ,
The chariot stands, the warriors sit.
The war begins, the time is nigh,
Now let the Kurus bleed and die!"*

And thus the sky with thunder broke,
As Krishna’s words like fire spoke.
No peace remained, no light, no call—
Only the echoes of war’s cruel fall.

Mahabharata had begun.

A Warrior’s Dilemma

With a fierce roar, he stood so tall,
Revealing his form, the Lord of all.
Hari emerged, his radiance bright,
And Kurus trembled at his sight.

Yet ahead, with fearless grace,
Stood Radheya, a smile on his face.
Hari beheld him, heart so wide,
And took his hand with love and pride.

Swiftly then, with urgent call,
He led Karna beyond the hall.
*"Forgive my friend, let go, forget,
He knows not your divine aspect yet.

A fool to greed, his wisdom blind,
Oh Yadunandan, be kind, be kind.
But tell me, Hari, what gift shall be?
For you, O Lord, ask anything from me!"*

Hari smiled, his gaze so wise,
"No plea for pardon, no disguise.
I only wished, before this war,
To tell you who you truly are."

Beyond the city, far from sight,
Karna stood in golden light.
*"Behold, O son, and hear me now,
A truth concealed, a fate to bow.

You are no charioteer's heir,
But Suryaputra, bright and rare.
Not Radheya, but Kounteya true,
Born to Kunti before she knew.

By Durvasa's sacred boon,
You came to life before the moon.
But in a box, upon a stream,
You sailed away, a mother's dream.

Adhiratha took you as his son,
Yet you are Pandava, the chosen one.
You are their eldest, their rightful kin,
A prince by blood, a king within."*

Karna gasped, his mind a storm,
His warrior heart both fierce and warm.
"First Pandava? This cannot be!
Tell me, Keshava, speak not to me

With games of fate, with tricks so sly,
Do not weave this web of lies!"

But Krishna spoke, with calm, with grace,
*"Why bear your armor, why this face?
Why does Surya grant you might?
Why does gold upon you light?

Why do your veins hold strength untold?
Why is your skin like burning gold?
Why did six months alone suffice,
For victory vast, for war's device?

Come, Karna, leave this path,
Do not let fate provoke your wrath.
For in the war, you shall arise,
As Pandavas' king, with honored ties!

Arjuna shall stand behind your reign,
Bhima shall bow without disdain.
No greed for throne does Yudhishthir bear,
Nor Nakula, Sahadeva care.

Your name shall thunder, praised so high,
Crowned as emperor, ruling the sky!
And Draupadi, with joy untold,
Shall place her hand in yours to hold!"*

Karna stood in silent fire,
His heart in battle, torn, entire.
Tears rolled from his warrior eyes,
His lips did quake, his soul did rise.

*"Why now, O Madhava, tell me why?
Why does my soul refuse to fly?
Why now does mother's love appear?
Why does my heart betray me here?

Should I embrace the ones who scorned,
Who cursed my name, who left me torn?
Should I forget the words, the pain,
The wounds that bled in silent rain?

O Krishna, I cannot flee,
From those who raised and stood by me.
A mother's love, I never knew,
Yet Radha's warmth, so strong, so true.

Was I not a son to her?
Her love was pure, her bond was sure.

She held me close, she bore my pain,
She never let me cry in vain.

And my dear brother, Shona bright,
He shares my face, my strength, my might.
Arjuna may be bound by fate,
But Shona is my soul's own mate.

Shall I forsake my loyal friend,
For power's lure, for war's dark end?
Duryodhana, my king, my trust,
Through shame and scorn, he held me just.

He gave me love, he gave me name,
When all the world had scorn and blame.
Shall I betray the bond so true,
For the Pandavas I barely knew?

No, Keshava, I shall not stray,
My fate is carved, my path won't sway.
Let my head be severed clean,
But I shall never Pandava be!"*

One breath alone, yet all was said,
And Krishna stood with lowered head.
No words remained, no plea, no art,
For truth had pierced the deepest heart.

Yet still he spoke, his voice so grave,
A sorrow deep, yet strong, yet brave.
*"Radheya, you are right, indeed,
A man of honor, bold in deed.

The world shall sing your name so proud,
No other warrior stands so vowed.
No victor's crown, no kingdom's grace,
Shall dim the light upon your face.

You shall not die a nameless man,
Your story time itself shall span.
Though war shall claim you, blood and dust,
The world shall call you 'Deathless Trust.'

And Draupadi shall honor thee,
Your name in prayers shall always be.
And she, whom fate had shamed one day,
Shall whisper 'Karna' when she prays.

Go, Radheya, your path is sworn,
Our fates entwined since we were born.

The world shall see what honor means,
Through you, the hero, without queens."*

Thus Krishna turned and walked away,
And Karna stood, in fate’s own sway.
The war awaited, the time had come,
A hero’s tale, forever sung.

The Tears of Karna

Why, O Vasu,
Why do you stand outside so?
You are now a king, my child,
Champanagari's proud shadow.

With playful tease and loving call,
Radha gazed into my face.
She knew, without a word at all,
My heart was lost in silent space.

"What happened, son?" she asked with care,
Her tears like rain began to fall.
She pulled me close in her embrace,
And sobbed as if she knew it all.

*"Radha, that cunning Vasudev,
Plays his tricks upon my soul.
His only wish, his only goal—
To make the Pandavas rise and grow.

But, Radha Mata, you are mine,
My only mother, forever true!
Am I not the son of charioteers?
Tell me, speak! Is this not true?"*

A silence deep, a piercing wound,
Fell between us, dark and vast.
Radha wept, her voice was mute,
Her tears alone spoke of the past.

And Krishna's words, they struck anew,
Their meaning clear, no longer veiled.
With trembling heart, I fell apart,
My mother's feet—my fate curtailed.

I clung to her, I cried so free,
Like a child, lost, in agony.
Though I wished to stand so tall,
I shattered, helpless in her call.

O Radha, boundless heart,
Your love has lit my path so far.
Your sacrifice, your silent art,
Your shadow shields my every scar.

I kissed her lines of fate so deep,
Upon her grand and noble brow.
*"Suryaputra, prince or king?
No, Radheya—I kneel, I bow.

I am your son, I shall not wane,
A charioteer's blood runs in my vein.
The world may change, the heavens call,
But, O my mother, I stand tall!

Krishna forgot Yashoda's love,
For Devaki, who bore his birth.
But Karna shall not turn away,
From Radha, who gave him worth!"*

Radha, My Mother

Radha, my mother, tell me true,
Why does your love so deeply flow?
Vasudeva schemes with cunning mind,
A trickster's heart, deceitful show.

He claims that I, the eldest stand,
That Kunti bore me as her son.
Yet now, for war, he bends so low,
To tie my blood to those I've shunned.

Tell me, Mother, is it lies?
All of this, a wicked play?
Yet, Vasu drank your milk,
He lived on it, day by day.

Your silence shakes my very core,
It kills my faith, it stirs my doubt.
What if Krishna speaks the truth?
My thoughts now twist, they turn about.

So it is true—O blessed be!
Mother Radha, your love so vast, divine.
Why did you hold a river’s waste,
And cradle it as if it’s thine?

When first I came into your arms,
Your milk did break, your heart did shine.
O mother Radha, you alone, my fate,
The goddess who has made me mine.

Rajmata Kunti—perhaps she bore me,
But who in fever held me tight?
Who cleaned my wounds, who soothed my cries,
Who made my darkness turn to light?

Why should she now return to me?
Why claim the son she cast away?
You alone, my mother true,
Your love unbending, come what may.

Did you oppose my warrior’s path,
To shield me from the bitter end?
Did you drink poison drop by drop,
So fate would never twist nor bend?

They scorn you for the name you bear,
But mother Radha, you are greater still.
For through your love, through toil and pain,
You shaped a warrior’s mighty will.

Though in a hut you made your home,
And shared your bread, so torn and dry,
You raised a son, so grand, so bold,
A victor’s fate within your eye.

Karna-Kunti Dialogue

With bitter truth from Keshava’s lips,
Bearing lashes of fate on his chest,
Dutiful in alms and dharma’s grip,
Radheya walked to the river’s crest.

As the sun emerged in crimson hue,
He offered his prayer with reverence deep,
A ritual unknowingly performed anew—
A son’s tribute his father to keep.

From afar, beneath a Kadamba tree,
A faint silhouette caught his sight.
Beside her stood a royal chariot grand,
With five white horses gleaming bright.

As he wrapped his upper cloth with grace,
Radheya turned to leave once more,
Yet something stirred in time and space,
A silent storm shook him to the core.

Then came a voice—soft, yet torn,
"Son!"—it echoed, trembling, warm.
His heart recoiled, his soul was torn,
Strange was this love, sudden in form!

Why today, this call so deep?
Why this memory from rivers steep?
A son once cast to waters wild,
Why now remember that forsaken child?

Memories of disgrace came rushing back,
The shame, the taunts, the burning past—
A newborn tossed, unwanted, lost,
Deemed impure by a mother’s wrath.

A princess—Kunti, and her royal line,
Why did she shrink the world so fine?
For love of status, for fear of shame,
Why did a mother forsake my name?

He bowed before her, head held high,
"Command me, Queen, I shall comply!
What gift do you seek from a charioteer’s son?
Tell me, and consider it done.

A kingdom vast, with gems untold,
Gold, silver, rubies, riches bold—

Command me, O Queen, speak without fear!
Radheya shall grant your wish, right here!"

The queen stepped forth, her head bent low,
"No bitter words, my son, please know!
Krishna must have told you true,
I am your mother—none but you!"

"Mother?" Karna laughed, a piercing sound,
"Strange, that now, such words abound!
A motherless child I have always been,
Radha alone I've ever seen.

And now, this sudden tide of love?
This bond you speak of, sent from above?
Where was this love on cursed nights,
When cruel voices mocked my plight?

You knew the pain, you knew it all,
Yet silent stood behind palace walls.
Your sons—your own—shamed me still,
Called me low, crushed my will.

They whipped me with words of scorn,
Their taunts like daggers I have borne!
And now you stand before me, weak,
To ask my heart in pleading meek?

O fate! O twisted time's decree!
You come today, but not for me.
Five sons you name, your love's grand call,
Yet one you left—never yours at all!"

Kunti wept, her eyes turned dim,
"My child, I have suffered too.
Though fate was cruel, though past is grim,
I plead today, for love so true.

Your brothers stand on the battlefield near,
A war of blood, of swords and fear.
Forsake the Kauravas, come to me,
Reclaim your place in destiny!

Yudhishthira seeks not the throne,
Bhima's might is his alone.
Arjuna shall drive your chariot proud,
Nakul, Sahadev shall serve you vowed.

Draupadi shall kneel before your grace,
She shall anoint your feet with gold and paste.

Come, O son, return to light,
Do not fade in war’s dark night.

And if you refuse to take this path,
Then grant me alms—one final act!
Promise me, O Karna dear,
Spare my sons—their lives, my prayer."

Karna smiled—a somber shade,
And from his heart, the burden swayed.
Now he knew, now he saw,
Why his chariot bore but five—no more.

"Five sons?" he mused, "You speak so true,
Yet not once did I count with you.
Today, you come, but not for me—
A Queen you are, but no mother to thee.

Your forsaken child, by river cast,
You have slain me twice at last!
I may conquer all in war,
Yet you have crushed my soul so far!"

"One promise, Mother, I shall give,
No Pandava, save Arjuna, shall I outlive!
I shall not raise my bow in wrath,
But only against him shall I walk this path!

I shall show my skill, my warrior’s pride,
No mercy shall Arjuna bide.
Yet, when I fall, my body slain,
Hold my head, and ease my pain.

Let me rest upon your lap,
A moment of love, though brief, at last.
Let death not steal what life denied,
A mother’s touch—so long cast aside.

Yet tell them not, not now, not soon,
Lest their hands refuse the sword by noon.
Only when my life is past,
Reveal the truth—my name, at last.

Let them scatter my bones in the sacred tide,
Let my ashes in their hands reside.
Let them call me ‘brother’ once I’m gone,
Let death grant what life has shunned.

Now, O Mother, I bid farewell,
Bless me as I march through hell!

For righteousness calls, and war is near,
The land must cleanse itself of fear.

Blood shall flow, the ground shall quake,
The earth shall shudder with what’s at stake.
Let battle rage, let dharma reign,
For only through fire shall truth remain!

With folded hands, my plea I weave,
At last, let justice triumph and peace believe!"

Narayana or the Narayani Sena?

To seek Hari’s aid, Duryodhana came,
With the same desire, Arjuna did the same.
Yet, there lay Krishna, resting still,
As Arjuna sat at His feet, calm and still.

But Duryodhana, proud and tall,
Had already taken the upper hall.
Brimming with arrogance, full of might,
He sat in confidence, sure of his right.

Yet the Lord had plans anew,
Beyond the grasp of those who knew.
As Yadunandan awoke and smiled,
His gaze met Arjuna’s, soft and mild.

"What is it, Arjuna? Speak thy plea,
What dost thou seek today from me?"

Duryodhana scoffed and rose to say,
"But I arrived before him today!
Why ask him before you ask me?
This is unfair, as all can see!"

Krishna smiled, serene and bright,
"Duryodhana, I saw no sight
Of thee when first I opened my eyes—
To Arjuna went my first surprise.

If thou still find'st this unjust,
Then ask before him, if thou must.
Two choices stand before thee now,
Speak thy will, take thy vow.

One is Narayana—myself alone,
With neither weapons, nor sword of stone.
Or take instead my mighty force,
The Narayani Sena—warriors coarse.

One is but me, unarmed, at peace,
The other—an army, their strength won’t cease.
Choose wisely, prince, for war draws near,
One shall serve, the other disappear."

Duryodhana laughed—a scornful sound,
"My choice is clear, my thoughts are bound!

A lone unarmed man—what use is he?
A warrior needs an army free!

A hundred thousand strong and tall,
The Narayani Sena shall never fall!
With them, the Kuru host shall rise,
A force unmatched beneath the skies!"

Krishna turned and met Arjuna’s gaze,
But the Pandava stood with humble grace.
"Govinda, I seek none but you,
Let the army march where fate deems true.

I ask for thee, my guide, my light,
For where you stand, there lies the right."

Duryodhana scoffed, yet deep within,
A shiver ran beneath his skin.
For though his army strong might be,
He had not Krishna’s destiny.

Why this worry, O elder one?
Why does sleep elude thee now?
Bheem, Arjuna, do you fear,
That Karna has wrought our doom somehow?

His conquests echo far and wide,
Spreading dread upon our hearts.
His valorous tales, fierce and grand,
Have torn our courage apart.

Unyielding Magadha he has crushed,
Kuntala and Samasaptaka kneel.
Even mighty Bhagadatta's throne,
Has bowed before his steel.

His feet, to me, seem divine,
As if he walks like Kunti's son.
O brothers, our exile now,
Shall weigh heavier than the sun.

The slayer of Kiratas stands in wait,
Shall he ever let us flee?
His boundless strength, his wrath untamed—
Shall we ever break free?

The Divine Counsel of Geeta

The battlefield roared, the war drew near,
The warriors stood, their hearts austere.
But as Arjuna gazed upon his own,
His mighty bow trembled—his courage was gone.

"O Krishna," he sighed, **"what is this plight?**
To thirst for blood, to revel in fight?
Is this the path of righteous fame,
Or but a kingdom's cruel game?"

The grandsire's love, his guru's grace,
Still lingered fresh in memory's space.
Though Duryodhana ruled in might and pride,
He was still my brother—by my mother's side.

Gandhari's love, though veiled in pain,
Had blessed the Pandavas all the same.
How can I slay those bound by birth?
Is a throne of blood of any worth?

Krishna listened, his face grew stern,
A silence fell, the winds did turn.
As if Arjuna's bow had lost its song,
And time itself had paused too long.

"**O Madhava, I seek no war,**
No throne, no kingdom near or far.
For what is power if kin must die?
What victory is won through cries?"

A knowing smile crossed Krishna's face,
He saw in Arjuna a soul of grace.
Yet he knew the battle must be fought,
For Dharma's sake, not worldly lot.

"If peace you sought, why stand you here?
Why join this war with doubt and fear?
If love for kin now clouds your mind,
Why played you dice, left fate behind?"

Arjuna bowed in shame and grief,
He knew his heart sought no relief.
"**A life in exile, let it be,**
A murderer I shall never be."

But Krishna’s voice now thundered strong,
His form divine, his stance so long.
The universe within him swirled,
A sight unseen in mortal world.

"**Listen, O Parth, and know me true,**
I am the One, both old and new.
In Treta I was Rama, the just,
Who slew his kin when Dharma must.

Parshuram, Mohini, Vamana’s grace,
Through many forms, I took my place.
Hiranyaksha fell, Narasimha rose,
And still my tale forever flows.

For thee alone, this war is cast,
And yet you waver, bound by past.
The sins of Kauravas weigh this land,
Yet you falter, bow in hand?"

Did they not plot in halls of stone,
To burn you all, to take your home?
Did they not bind and shame your wife,
While silence ruled, no voice for strife?

A woman stood, her honor torn,
Yet none to save her, none to mourn.
Even Bhishma, great and tall,
Watched in silence—he let her fall.

O Pandavas, why now repent?
Why let your hearts be torn and bent?
For Dharma’s call, this war must blaze,
To cleanse the world of darkened days.

Arjuna wept, his hands grew tight,
His bow still trembled at the sight.
But Krishna's words now lit a fire,
To cleanse the land from sin and mire.

"Glory is not in the throne you claim,
But in sacrifice, in Dharma’s name.
Rise, O son of Kunti, stand,
Let not your faith be crushed by sand."

"Lift your bow, unleash your might,
End the sinners, restore the light!
For on your chariot rides the Lord—
Now fight, O warrior, with your sword!"

The Real Fear

At the war’s very dawn,
Krishna stood firm, urging them on.
To the Pandavas, he gave his might,
Yet they trembled at the coming fight.

Before them, the Kuru force did rise,
A sight that shook even warriors wise.
Memories of Bhishma, Drona, and Karna loomed,
Each a legend, their fate presumed.

Bhishma, Drona, Karna—the three,
Held the power of Parashurama’s decree.
Karna—a storm upon Aryavarta’s lands,
A warrior unmatched by mortal hands.

A titan greater than Bhima’s might,
With a solar mark burning bright.
Heads fell as he marched on his quest,
From Bhagdatta to Rukmi—all put to test.

A scholar unmatched, a statesman grand,
A warrior whose strength few could withstand.
Sun’s devotion, his shadow’s flame,
A blazing force, his name acclaimed.

The string of his bow sang like thunder,
A battle cry tearing foes asunder.
His purity, his sacrifice vast,
An immortal warrior unsurpassed.

Slayer of demons in a single breath,
Crusher of kings, a bringer of death.
His power known in Draupadi’s halls,
Her humiliation etched in his calls.

He stood against the Pandavas' reign,
Mocked their pride, deepened their pain.
Yet, he knew Duryodhana’s schemes,
But never shattered his friend’s dreams.

He denied Kunti as his mother true,
But in secret, sorrow he knew.
The gambling game—he had foreseen,
Yet remained bound, his heart unseen.

He who wept as the palace burned,
A friend to many, yet fate had turned.
He could have won Draupadi’s hand,
Yet chose restraint, a noble stand.

He could have crushed Bhima’s might,
Yet held back in honor’s light.
Burdened by fate, shackled by pain,
Bearing humiliation time and again.

Unspoken sins he sought to erase,
Through duty, courage, and boundless grace.
A warrior grand, yet branded low,
Denied his birthright, forced to bow.

Had he wished, he’d claim the throne,
Rule Aryavarta as his own.
Yet he let the Pandavas reign,
Despite a power none could restrain.

Years of rejection, wounds unhealed,
Yet never once his honor repealed.
Bound by love, by fate betrayed,
His love for Vrishali never swayed.

A hero feared, a force untamed,
Yet bound by dharma, unashamed.
The gods themselves did whisper low,
That Karna's fall was fate’s cruel blow.

Brahmastra’s loss would be his fate,
For destiny sealed his warrior’s state.
A firestorm raged in his command,
A conqueror who could shake the land.

To stop him, fate devised a ploy,
A tragic game, a cruel decoy.
Even death would bow to his embrace,
For Karna's soul shone in death’s face.

His armor struck terror’s sound,
As death itself danced on battlegrounds.
Karna, the warrior, fate’s cruel jest,
A fallen sun, forever blessed.

The Great Giver
(Karna – Shona – Indra's Dialogue)

Shona
Suddenly, he woke with a startled cry,
Pacing restless, lost in the sky.
"Last night, in dreams so deep,
I heard the gods in whispers speak.
A vision strange, a fate untold,
A sip of venom, a tale grown old.

Tomorrow, my trial stands near,
A test of will, of truth, of fear.
Indra himself will come my way,
To steal my shield, my fate to sway.
A scheme so cruel, a plot so sly,
To guard Arjuna, let me die!

Brother, heed my words, beware,
This is deceit beyond compare!
You are the warrior, fierce and true,
None can match your might, but few.
Do not give this fatal gift,
Keep your vow, let honor lift!
Think of Duryodhana's trust in thee,
Think of your oath—your destiny!"

Karna
"Am I so weak without my shield?
Is my skill in arms a wasted yield?
I wish to test my strength alone,
To prove my worth by hand, by bone.
Let Indra come, let fate unfold,
This, too, is victory untold!

In his wisdom vast, my brother stands,
But I must walk my path, unplanned.
Fortunate am I, to call him kin,
Yet his mind, I cannot win."

(Indra Appears Disguised as a Brahmin)

A humble voice, so wise, so old,
Echoed forth, serene yet bold.
"O Karna, famed for generosity,
Your name resounds in history.
I seek no gold, nor cattle fine,
No lands, no wealth, no gems divine.
A simple gift, a boon so rare,
A test of truth, if you so dare.

Give me your armor, bright and grand,
Tear it from your flesh, by hand.
Slice your ears, let jewels fall,
And prove your name, above them all!"

Karna
"So be it! But show your face,
Reveal the truth—unveil this place!
Are you not Indra, mighty and wise?
Why stoop so low with this disguise?
Do you not trust your Arjuna’s might?
Does my shield blind you with fright?

But lo, no beggar leaves my gate,
Empty-handed to curse my fate.
Take it, Lord, but heed my cry,
The stain of this shall never die!
Take my flesh, my form, my pain,
Hang it high in heaven’s domain.
Teach the world what torment be,
Let them know my agony!"

(Karna Cuts His Own Flesh)

The dagger plunged, the skin gave way,
A crimson flood, a dawn turned grey.
Layer by layer, he stripped it bare,
A butchered beast, yet standing there.
His ears were torn, his blood ran free,
Yet not a cry escaped—no plea.

Even the gods above stood still,
Shaken by his iron will.
Even Indra, high and proud,
Faltered 'neath his mercy’s shroud.

Indra
"Forgive me, warrior, fierce and bright,
You are the flame, the guiding light.
Never before has heaven seen,
A heart so vast, a soul so clean.
Take this gift, a weapon grand,
A force to strike at fate’s command.
Yet use it once, and once alone,
Then fortune leaves you, carved in stone."

(Karna Stands in Silence)

As Indra vanished, Karna gazed,
At the sun, unshaken, unfazed.

Like Vishnu's stride through realms unknown,
He stood, unmoved, yet all alone.

A Half-Warrior..?

The war conch roared aloud,
The battlefield stirred, the plans were vowed.
Chariots lined with fiery might,
Angarak, Alayudh, Ambashtha stood in sight.
Rakshasa kings took up their place,
Gajdal, Anushrav, and Anushalv in grace.
Aparajit, Achal, Vindh, Anuvindh—
To rein the steeds, their arms were pinned.

The horsemen rode, the kings took lead,
Kshemamurti, Kshemadarshan,
Bhagadatta, and Paundrak keen.
Masters of war, warriors famed,
Drona, Kripa, Shalya, Shakuni named.
Duryodhana, Dushasana stood with pride,
Each with a stance, no fear to hide.

All great kings of Kurukshetra stood,
Magadh, Madra, Bahlika, Gandhar,
Avanti, Nishad, Chedi, Sindh—
Ready to fight, in Kuru's guard.

Duryodhana turned, his choice was made,
He wished to crown me chief in aid.
"Aangraj Karna! Let him reign,
Victory shall be ours again!"
I rose and spoke with measured voice,
"Let Bheeshma lead—the rightful choice!
The one who humbled Parshuram’s might,
Should lead the Kurus in this fight!"

With a lion’s roar, Bheeshma stood,
In robes of white, as strong as wood.
"Listen well, let war be just,
Let not honor turn to dust!

Shalya shall lead the horsemen bold,
Dushasana, the elephants hold.
Let the Rakshasa kings command,
Shakuni’s mind shall lead the land.
Sanajay, Chiravasas shall aid,
Ashwatthama shall give his blade.

Duryodhana, you lead the foot,
With Jayadratha in close pursuit.
And among the mighty warlords here,
Ashwatthama, Jayadratha, Shakuni,
Duryodhana, Dushasana, Shalya,
Bhagadatta, Vikarna—all stand clear!
Each one, a chariot-lord supreme,
A warrior beyond what fate may dream!"

Laxman, Vindh, Anuvindh, Uluka, Sahadev,
Shall add their force, their presence grave.
"And among them, I call them so—
The masters of war, the finest to know—
But Karna… A Half-Warrior alone!
For he has given away his own,
His shield, his earrings—his fate unmade,
A warrior strong, yet fate-betrayed!"

A furious rage burned wild and bright,
Duryodhana rose to match the slight.
I pulled him down, my hands held firm,
Though inside me, a fire burned.
I, the just, the warrior true,
The rightful heir of battle's view!

But the weight of shame lay bare,
His words had stripped me standing there.
I—the one who struck in war,
The one who shook Aryavarta’s core,
The one who won in six short moons,
Had stood in silence, cold as ruins.

Oh, Kuru kings, so blind with pride,
Until defeat, you shall not bide!
A son of Suta stands in grace,
But not till loss shall you give place.

I left the court, my tears ran free,
A storm of rage, a drowning sea.
I wished to scream for all to hear—
"I am Kshatriya, make it clear!
A Pandava’s blood, a warrior’s child,
Born in shadow, yet fate-defiled!"

But then I stopped—my heart grew still,
A thought arose against my will.
At last, this sorrow would come to end,
The Sutaputra would break, would bend.
And when my fate, my doom is met,
The world will weep, in deep regret.

Tears shall cloud each warrior’s sight,
Their hearts will ache, their breath turn tight.
Then they shall know, too late, too late,
How caste and pride had shaped my fate.

How strange I was—this warrior bold,
Yet caught in feuds both blind and cold!
On the battlefield, a fate so dire,
To slay my kin in war’s own fire!

A saint at heart, for mother’s call,
A warrior bound to friendship’s thrall.

Sanjaya's Revelation…

The war began—destruction vast,
Weapons clashed, shadows cast.
Blades met fire, steel met steel,
A war so great, the heavens reeled.

Upon Nandighosh, the master wise,
Krishna turned the battle's tides.
Ten days of fury, ten days of rage,
Yet war felt dull, like a lifeless stage.

For Arjuna and the sons of Kunti,
For Madri's heirs, both fierce and free,
A single fear still loomed so stark—
Karna, the golden flame in dark.
The pride of Aryavarta's land,
Yet silent still—no blade in hand.
Like oceans vast yet calm they flow,
Before their tides begin to grow.

No mighty warrior has yet been slain,
No battle won, no true gain.
Yet victory whispers near and far,
For Krishna guides the Pandavas' war.

A grave disaster, O King, beware!
A dreadful omen fills the air.
Bhishma falls! The grandsire bold,
Kuru's sky begins to fold.
A princess of Kashi, once spurned with pride,
Returns as fate—A warrior's guide.
Amba reborn, her wrath untamed,
Like Time itself—dark, unchained.
The first of Kuru's warlords fell,
As if their lineage rang its knell.

Bhishma-Karna Dialogue

The banner of the Kauravas fell today,
The son of Ganga on arrows lay.
O noble elder, O warrior grand,
I know your heart, I understand.
Though you have always cast me away,
My heart still holds you in golden sway.

You denied me time and again,
Yet my reverence remains the same.
You are my elder, my teacher wise,
And still, you call me a fool in disguise!

"You are Kunti's son—yes, I know!
You are my grandson, my own blood's flow!"

Trembling lips, Karna spoke,
The warrior fell, his voice broke.
Sank to the ground, a storm inside,
Tears untamed he could not hide.

"I know the truth, I always knew,
Yet from reality, I withdrew.
I called you lowborn, not to scorn,
But to shield you from brother's war."

Did I not know your dreadful might?
Did I not see your power bright?
Why was Vijaya bow not yours?
Why did fate lock battle's doors?
Because you are the eldest heir,
The Sun God's child—beyond compare!
You are Kurukshetra's blazing sun,
And Kauravas' war trumpet begun.

"O noble tiger of the Kuru race,
Grant me pardon, embrace my grace.
Stand beside me in truth's embrace,
Let falsehood die without a trace."

"I honor your law, your royal path,
I know your vow, your warrior's wrath.
Victory belongs to Pandavas' fate,
Do not let rage decide too late."

"O Savyasachi, O Kunti's might,
Lead the Kurus in their final fight.
Let all be dust beneath your storm,
But heed one vow, keep it warm—
Remember your brothers, remember this day,
Let not their corpses in hatred lay."

Shri Krishna’s Description of Karna

O Parth, the first Kuru general,
Now lies in his eternal rest.
Yet under Drona’s command,
Time itself turns to test.

In this grand war, Bhishma fell,
A warrior strong, yet fate’s mere shell.
He had the right, yet stood denied,
His greatness lost, his duty tied.

But Karna—his ribs are steel,
His heart, a shield no blade can peel.
O Parth, beware, take heed today,
For only you must strike his way.

If you falter, if you fall,
Destruction waits to claim you all.
For Karna’s death will seal the fate,
Of kingdoms lost, of paths too late.

He who once roared with wrath,
Now lies in silence on fate’s path.
O Parth, your teacher now is near,
Yet Drona’s fall must soon appear.

O son of Vayu, unleash your might,
Bring Ashwatthama to his final fight.
O Yudhishthira, your words be true,
Let dharma’s weight now rest on you.

As planned, the battle turned,
No fate was changed, no lesson learned.
"Narova Kunjarova," whispered low,
As Ashwatthama fell below.

A father aged, of sorrow deep,
Collapsed to earth, too lost to weep.
Drupada’s son, enraged in sight,
Rushed forth, his sword took flight.

A blink, a breath—too late to save,
The blade had left, his head now grave.
Blood ascended through the air,
Like fountains rising in despair.

The master fell, who taught them all,
The teacher of justice, the final call.
And Karna, shunned for years untold,
Held Ashwatthama in an embrace bold.

Upon the banks of Dushtavati's flow,
The flames for Drona rose aglow.
The third commander of Kuru's might,
Was gone, his soul took its flight.

Wrapped in robes of purest white,
A warrior watched the burning light.
Like Vishnu's dwarf in realms of three,
He stood, with steps to destiny.

Karna’s Lament: The Deaths of Abhimanyu and Vrishasena

Abhimanyu—my nephew, noble and fierce,
Son of Subhadra, a warrior without fear.
A sharp-cut nose, eyes that shone,
Like Arjuna reborn, in battle alone.

A prince of Matsya, wedded in grace,
Destined to shatter the war’s embrace.
His wife bore life within her womb,
Yet fate had drawn his doom.

At dawn, as roosters cried aloud,
The battlefield turned to a crimson shroud.
With each strike, a layer was torn,
Like peeling an onion, his path was sworn.

A second Arjuna he seemed to be,
Striking down warriors fearlessly.
He felled chariots, elephants, men,
Yet the six Maharathis encircled him then.

Yes, I was among them too,
Driven by hatred, yet my heart withdrew.
Was it for Arjuna I burned inside?
Or to see the Pandavas crushed in pride?

His soft, lotus-like form was torn,
Like bees had stung his petals worn.
Arrows and swords carved his skin,
Shattering the armor deep within.

His agony left a bitter trace,
A nephew’s cry, a kinsman’s face.
Even Krishna’s touch couldn’t mend,
A life that fate refused to bend.

Yet still, he fought, he would not yield,
Defying death upon the field.
Then Shakuni’s blade struck deep and raw,
And Lakshmana clashed with Abhimanyu in war.

Their fatal blows left both undone,
And his severed head met the sun.
Even if we never truly knew,
By blood, he was my kin too.

But what could I do, O fate so cruel?
For in that moment, I was still a ‘Suta’s’ fool.
And when the last breath left his chest,
The Kurus bared their demonic crest.

Yet, as war’s fate was sealed that day,
Abhimanyu rose a legend to stay.
My sword, though, would never strike,
For truth had blinded all my might.

But Vrishasena, my son so brave,
Was cut down—no soul to save.
Encircled, hunted, slain with rage,
By Arjuna’s hand, he met his cage.

Bheem had no second thought,
As my young son’s life was caught.
Where was Dharma in that hour?
Where was justice in their power?

If war demands the death of men,
Then why am I the villain again?
Abhimanyu, Vrishasena, Prasena too,
All turned to ash, their fates withdrew.
Yet I am left, with nothing but grief,
Drowning in sorrow, without relief.

That night, as darkness fell,
Vrishali’s wails rose like a knell.
Fire raged within her chest,
A widow’s torment, no peace, no rest.

She clung to me, her sobs so raw,
Her trembling frame, the grief I saw.
Even in sleep, she gasped in pain,
Murmuring my son’s name again.

“Stop this war,” she begged me then,
“Your life means more than vengeance, when
The world would burn with Karna’s fall,
I cannot live without you at all.”

And so I whispered, holding her near,
“My love, do not curse my slayer dear.
Even in death, beyond the night,
I will remain in your embrace so tight.”

Bhima-Yudhishthira’s Clash

The chariot raced with maddening speed,
Shalya, my charioteer, cursed me in greed.
"Suta-putra! Suta-putra!"—he taunted aloud,
Once a beggar to me, now arrogant and proud.

Ahead stood Yudhishthira, barring my way,
For my mother’s word, I turned away.
A swift arrow came hissing near,
I caught it gently—two fingers, clear.

"Fight me, Suta-putra!"—his fury untamed,
With a single arrow, his chariot I claimed.
His warriors fell, one by one,
The battlefield roared—the fight was begun.

Yudhishthira fled, his strength undone,
And Bhima’s valor, I watched like the sun.
Bhima—the slayer of Bakasura’s might,
The one who had crushed Jarasandha in fight.

Ninety-eight Kauravas sent to their doom,
Draupadi entered the war camp’s gloom.
Dushasana’s end was now in sight,
Bhima prepared for a savage fight.

Seeing him, the storm he became,
His wrathful roar, the heavens claimed.
Weapons stilled, the air grew tight,
Even arrows paused in mid-flight.

The battle raged with dreadful sound,
Like death itself had touched the ground.
Dushasana fought with all his power,
But Bhima struck like fate’s last hour.

His mace came down—a thunderous crash,
Dushasana fell, blood pouring in a flash.
In one fierce move, his arm was torn,
Like a hunter plucking roots at dawn.

Teeth clenched, Bhima struck again,
His rage more vast than a demon’s reign.
The oath he swore, he now fulfilled,
As Dushasana’s blood he cruelly spilled.

With his blood, Draupadi’s hair he stained,
The insult was washed, revenge was gained.
And when the deed was finally done,
He stood before me, his fury unsung.

We fought like lions, in endless strife,
Yet, I would not take his life.
I struck with power, yet spared his pride,
Respect for my brother, I kept inside.

But rage burst forth, the sun took hold,
And my warrior’s soul turned fierce and bold.
I grabbed his throat, he gasped for air,
Bhima, the giant, fell in despair.

Yet, I let him live—my promise stood,
The taste of victory faded like wood.
With bowed head, he walked away,
And the war raged on till break of day…

The Slaying of Ghatotkacha

Karna, enraged by his son's demise,
Tore through the Pandava ranks in his rise.
The warriors fought, but all in vain,
His arrows split their chests with pain.

Cries for mercy filled the air,
Only to vanish, lost in despair.
Arjuna could not step ahead,
His Vaijayanti arrow remained unshed.

Vaijayanti—Indra’s gift so divine,
A weapon of fate, a power sublime.
Karna’s dark eyes sought his prey,
Yet none dared stand in his way.

If this continued, all would be lost,
Pandava strength would turn to dust.
"O Achyuta! Find a way,
Dim the Suta-putra’s ray!"

Yudhishthira, trembling, spoke aloud,
I glanced at Bhima in the crowd.
A midnight war was set in plan,
Ghatotkacha was called to stand.

Ghatotkacha—
A demon’s son, Indra’s foe,
Hidimba’s child, with power aglow.
Night fell, and roars rang high,
As cries for rescue filled the sky.

It was a duty, not a ploy,
Not to kill, but to deploy.
Yet I feared—would fate allow?
Would Indra’s slayer fall somehow?

Thunder roared across the night,
Alayudha and Ghatotkacha locked in fight.
In mere moments, the Asura fell,
As Ghatotkacha crushed his shell.

Like a storm he swept the field,
Kurukshetra shook, his wrath revealed.

And then it came—the destined sight,
Two mad elephants charged to fight.

A clash to dazzle every eye,
Giants roared, the heavens sighed.
Karna’s arrows, swift and bright,
Met the demon's endless might.

But Karna stood, unshaken, grand,
A warrior with a steady hand.
His father’s death had fueled his fire,
And now he fought, his fate entire.

His arrows gleamed like molten gold,
Piercing through the demon bold.
Even through the pitch-dark night,
His aim was flawless, sharp and bright.

Ghatotkacha, vast and strong,
Saw his magic fail for long.
A lone warrior, Karna stood,
Defying the demon’s raging flood.

Then came the call—a desperate cry,
From Duryodhana, loud and high.
"Release Vaijayanti! Break their spine,
Or this battle will not be thine!"

A serpent slithered through his mind,
The thought of loss, cruel and unkind.
For without Vaijayanti, his quiver was bare,
Though many divine weapons rested there.

Brahma’s gift he did not wield,
Nor Narayana’s cosmic shield.
For Karna’s word was his sworn fate,
He would not strike his brother in hate.

"Give, O warrior! Give your might!"
The noble Karna saw the light.
A sage within, his heart was pure,
Yet bound by fate, he must endure.

He had not worn his sacred ring,
Nor clad his bow in holy string.
With arms raised high, he chanted deep,
And every heart began to weep.

A mortal bow—a godly deed,
A gift beyond what fate decreed.

Vaijayanti blazed, the air stood still,
Ghatotkacha trembled—his doom was sealed.

Like thunder struck from heaven’s hand,
He fell, lifeless, upon the land.
The giant roared, then crashed in woe,
And Pandavas drowned in sorrow’s flow.

Karna, now calmed, stood once more,
His warrior's wrath now burned no more.
I alone beheld his pain,
The silent tear that left its stain.

His bow still warm, his hands still tight,
Yet all could sense his fading might.
With Ghatotkacha’s final breath,
Arjuna’s fate escaped its death.

Bhima stared, his grief untold,
A father’s heart, now weak and cold.
Just as Karna had wept that day,
Bhima too had lost his way.

And yet, a fear within me grew,
For tomorrow, Karna’s bow would gleam anew.
With Vijaya in his mighty clasp,
The end was near—the dice were cast.

Arjuna knew not what fate had spun,
But Karna’s heart had seen it done.

Vadhaparvam

A sun shaped like a battle-axe,
From the womb of dawn did rise.
Arjuna marched with warrior's pride,
Like a beast with piercing eyes.

Under Karna's banner bold,
The Kuru army stood untold.
After ages long and grand,
The bow of victory graced his hand.

Sixteenth night of the lunar reign,
The earth bathed in Varuna's chain.
Yet, in truth, this grand display,
Was but my illusion at play.

Shalya's words would pierce him not,
Karna's fate in war was wrought.
Like a tiger fierce and wild,
He roared, his arrows rained beguiled.

Like stormwinds clashed, like fate's demand,
His chariot clashed with Arjun's stand.

Karna and Arjuna—A Duel of Ages

Karna and Arjuna faced the fray,
The three worlds shook in fierce dismay.

Arjuna...

A sage in torment, long defied,
Now sought to claim a warrior's pride.
Through forests dark, through winds unknown,
He wandered, cast in fate alone.

He who once did Shiva best,
Whose arrows struck without a test,
A prince adorned in battle's hue,
A son of Indra, fierce and true.

Yet doubts in me began to stir,
Despite his might, despite his spur.

A royal son, a light so bright,
Yet shielded far from battle’s plight.
Against him stood a storm so grand,
A force that shook the trembling land.

From birth denied a mother’s care,
Fed by rivers, crimson bared.
Knowledge blocked, his might restrained,
Honor lost, his name profaned.

Yet still he bore a fire untamed,
A son of Kunti, fate-engraved.
The son of Radha, debt to pay,
A warrior true, none turned away.

Even Arjuna feared his flame,
And Shalya sought to dim his name.

Cursed to sink in mud’s embrace,
Cursed to lose his final grace.
A gift he gave, his shield, his skin,
To keep a vow, to serve his kin.

And so this night, the battle drawn,
Would end with fate—a hero gone.

The Dance of Death

On the third bright moon, he rose as chief,
A Pandava once, yet now bound in grief.
Against him stood his brother bold,
Their bloodlines weaved, their fates foretold.

With night-bloomed flowers on his hand,
Karna stepped on battle’s sand.
At last, their chariots, side by side,
The storm had come, the fate was tied.

Was this a war of brothers' might?
A mother’s sons now locked in fight?
Like roaring lions, fangs laid bare,
Their arrows burned the midnight air.

Arjuna’s bow like lightning flashed,
But Karna struck, his chariot crashed.
With every arrow, step by step,
His pride was cracked, his breath was kept.

Krishna's Words

"Look, O warrior, look and see,
His chariot flees, he bends the knee!
A son of chariots, yet he shakes,
Against his storm, his courage breaks!"

Then with a strike, a crown was torn,
Arjuna's pride, now dust forlorn.

A step—just one, a chasm wide,
A gap so small, yet fate's divide.
The weight of gods upon the cart,
Had Karna failed? Or played his part?

His bow still roared, the winds still cried,
Hanuman stood, but fate denied.
A giver once, a warrior pure,
Yet bound by fate, his end was sure.

Shalya mocked, yet Karna rose,
A warrior's heart, his fury glows.
His chariot turned, the mud it found,
The wheel sunk deep, it held its ground.

The Final Hour

With speed unmatched, he chased them all,
His chariot deep in muddy thrall.
A snap, a crack, the wheel was seized,
His horses stilled, their cries appeased.

"Arjuna, wait! Let me be free,
Let me pull this wheel from me!"

His mighty bow lay still in dust,
Arjuna's hands grew weak with trust.
His arms pulled hard, his sweat poured red,
Yet fate's cold hands had sealed him dead.

"Pārtha, draw! Why do you wait?
Are you lost in time or tangled in fate?"

Krishna spoke, his voice was fire,
His words like fate, his will entire.

"Dharma? What dharma did he keep,
When Draupadi was shamed and weeped?
When Abhimanyu fell to dust,
Where was then his honor just?

Strike him down, let justice be,
End this war, set fate now free!"

A tear escaped from Karna's eye,
His head now bowed, prepared to die.

*Adharmi… (*The Unrighteous…)

I hold no wisdom of sacred lore,
Yet, am I ignorant to the core?
O moonlit prince, how could you forget,
The honor I lost, the wounds I met?
Like Karn cast in river's tide,
You cast me too from heart and mind.

Though royal blood ran in my veins,
I bore the sting of deceit's chains.
Yet I raised no sword in wrath,
Did Drona's denial not cross your path?
Did his cruel words not make you pause—
"Wipe off the filth,"—wasn't that his cause?
O Achyuta…!

And Draupadi, who cast me low,
Tell me, what wrong did I bestow?
Was she not the one to scorn,
To mock me first in court that morn?
On spring's bright full-moon night,
Did Pandavas not taunt me in spite?
Did Indra not in disguise arrive,
To steal the shield that kept me alive?

O Madhava, you must well know,
The promise I gave, the vow I owe.
Draupadi longed for golden bliss,
Was this too lost in your abyss?

Would Abhimanyu's pain not remain,
Had he endured a breath in vain?
To end his suffering, his cries,
I struck him down—was that unwise?
You knew it all, yet here you stand,
Calling me unjust by your command?

O Milind, I hear your call,
Take my life—I surrender all.
Quench your thirst with my demise,
I lay my arms—I pay the price.

Take my bow, take my soul,
Forgive my sins, make me whole…!

Krishna's Decree...

With mighty force, he pulled the wheel,
Yet let his mind show puzzled zeal.
Unaware? No! With purpose deep,
He let his foes their moment keep.

The spokes in his firm grip he found,
Yet the wheel stayed sunk in ground.
Like a crescent, my hands took shape,
"Drop your arms, Arjuna—no escape!
Strike him down, let justice prevail,
Slay him now, let fate unveil!"

Hearing my voice, with duty bright,
Arjuna stood, his chest alight.
Lest his aim should miss its mark,
Karna stepped aside from dark.
"Take your aim," I urged in pain,
My soul wept loud, though words were tame.

Swift as lightning, arrows soared,
One tore his chest—a crimson chord.
Another sliced his throat apart,
Kurukshetra silenced—beating heart.
The third great warlord of their line,
Fell with a crash, as fate divine.

With desperate rage, my whip I threw,
It vanished fast in winds that blew.
I rushed toward his fallen frame,
Yet, ahead—his master came.

There, like a shattered tree he lay,
The warrior sun had met his day.
Hearing the news, Duryodhan swayed,
Tears burst forth—he wept, afraid.
The prince who never once had cried,
Now broke apart—his grief untied.

"My friend was slain by cruel deceit!"
His shattered sobs, the air did meet.
Even as death began to creep,
Karna held his gaze—so deep.

Through his eyes, he told his king,
"End this war, let peace now sing.
Not for me shall you now fight,
But for your fate, with all your might..."

The Greatest Giver…!

Is there one great giver left on this earth?
One with the wealth to honor my worth?
The frail sage spoke, lips so weak,
Yet in his voice, strength did speak.

"What do you seek, O Brahmin King?
Whatever I have, I shall bring!"
Even then, with wheel-bound hands,
He sat firm, as fate demands.
The Kuru hosts let out a sigh,
To see his might, his spirit high.

"O Angaraj, my kin has died,
And wood for rites I must provide.
Seeing your state, I hesitate,
Yet need compels, I ask your fate."
He smiled and spoke, voice so bold,
"Take my teeth of purest gold.
Both are yours, without regret,
A gift unworthy of lament."

"Chitrasena, break my teeth apart!
Not my father, but my heart,
My soul, my war, my final breath,
Gives you this gift before my death."

A deep sigh—his armor cracked,
The iron plates of fate attacked.
The seventeenth dusk, cruel and grim,
Turned the skies to shadows dim.

Crack!—a sound, then bitter cries,
As blood-drenched teeth met mournful eyes.
Karna beheld his offering red,
And solemn words he softly said—
"An unclean gift, tainted with pain..."
A hush arose—he spoke again.

He gazed upon his father’s shade,
His guru's wrath, his fate well-made.
Tears poured from his sapphire eyes,
As storm clouds wept in distant skies.

He cleansed the gift with sacred care,
Broke a jasmine from his prayer.
With holy touch, to his brow he pressed,
And made his final gift the best.

In death’s embrace, he paused its flow,
For all his life was battle’s woe.
He turned to me, his final call,
And thus began his last word’s fall—

"O Keshava, perform my rite,
Lay me to rest on yonder height.
Let not my sorrows rise again,
Nor wars bring forth such wretched pain."

As these last words fell through the air,
His mighty head dropped low in prayer.
Duryodhana gasped in silent woe,
The Kuru flame had ceased its glow.
Yet through his fall, the world did learn,
The truest strength in hearts that burn.

On the seventeenth day, the warrior fell,
And opened the doors to Pandavas’ hell…!

***Ameen* hill..**

Though his vast form had turned to dust,
His brilliance still burned—steadfast, just.
Karna, who’d left all behind,
Had ascended, his soul refined.
The first son, cast in Ashwa's stream,
Now slept in peace, beyond all dream.

By the riverbank, his final breath he took,
His eyes closing in silence, no look.

Only one saw him, the one who bore,
The mother who wept, heart sore.
With regret she mourned her son,
The loss of one, the only one.

She held him close, in sorrow's grip,
Her tears like rivers did not slip.
She wept for deeds, now left behind,
Regretful thoughts, a restless mind.

With love she soothed, her heart torn apart,
And laid him to rest with solemn heart.
The sacred rites began their sweep,
In silence, the earth began to weep.

A distant echo of his last race,
The final run, slow and with grace.
His body, still—yet his soul burned bright,
My Radhey still fought the fight.

The sacred fire already laid,
I was to perform the final trade.
On Vayuji's back, my brother now lay,
The fire of life took him away.

With heavy heart, I gave the flame,
The crackling wood—his life to claim.
In the fire, the son of the sky did rise,
And Karna’s spirit reached the skies.

Silent, I watched with steady gaze,
His memory haunting in endless maze.
Tears fell from eyes, my sorrow deep,
With Vayuji’s aid, I began the sweep.

Then, swift as wind, a woman came,
Into the fire, without a name.
Vrushali entered, unaware,
Of the celestial garment she’d wear.

Her life, without Karna, incomplete,
A legacy lost, her heart in defeat.

I remembered pieces of the broken shell,
His heroic feats, the stories I tell.
Vrushali’s sacrifice was his gift,
Her offering—a soul to uplift.

In Mahabharata’s tale, Karna’s name,
A "great giver" forever aflame.

Back at my palace, the fire did burn,
Faraway flames, though late, did churn.
Only ash would remain, a sacred trace,
Of sacrifices made, in time and space…!

The Final Offering... Self Reflection

Perhaps I am not Karna in all his might,
But let me give a little, as I see the light.
Not like the Trinity, strong and pure,
But may my heart stay virtuous and sure.

Why burn with hatred for another's grace,
Why measure life with another's face?
Let us learn new ways, new paths to chart,
Fighting with courage, from the heart.

Let us not forget our culture's worth,
Nor let stubbornness take root on this earth.
In one house, one soul was both vile and pure,
A yogi like Krishna, a prince unsure…

Even today, there are Draupadis who see divide,
But there's Vrushali, who for equality does abide.
We can calm the Duryodhan within our friend,
We can silence the Dhushasana, to the very end.

Sometimes we must become Karna too,
Burn like gold in a fire anew.
Bear the wounds of betrayal and pain,
Endure the jabs of an ungrateful reign.

Had Draupadi accepted Karna's plight,
Had Kunti not failed him in her sight,
The story of Karna might not be,
Nor the charioteer's son so grand to be.

If fate hadn't tricked him, he would have thrived,
Without the curse, he would have survived.
We too are born to be something more,
Like Karna, let's strive for the ancient lore.

Let us learn the rituals of the Sun,
Let us know the strength of unity, begun.
Let us rise, not in wealth or fame,
But in the love for our land's eternal flame.

We can earn our due, live with pride,
Drive big cars, live the high life wide.
But let us not forget the land we tread,
Our India's soul, where heroes have bled.

Through blood and sacrifice, let us rise,
To carry this nation to the skies.
Let us be its undivided part,
Bound by its flame, in every heart…!

Creating pointwise relation charts for every character in the Mahabharata would involve a lot of details, as the Mahabharata features a complex network of relationships between numerous characters. I'll create an overview of the primary characters and their relationships with each other, which will give you an idea of how each is connected.

1. Kuru Family

- **King Shantanu** (father of Bhishma, Chitrangada, Vichitravirya)
  - **Queen Ganga** (mother of Bhishma)
  - **Queen Satyavati** (second wife, mother of Vyasa, and grandmother to Pandavas and Kauravas)
- **Bhishma** (son of King Shantanu and Ganga)
  - Devoted to the throne, took a vow of celibacy.
- **Satyavati** (second wife of Shantanu, mother of Vyasa)
  - Mother of **Vyasa** (author of Mahabharata).

2. The Pandavas (sons of King Pandu)

- **King Pandu** (father of the Pandavas, son of Vichitravirya)
  - Married to **Kunti** and **Madri**.
  - Father of the Pandavas: **Yudhishthira**, **Bhima**, **Arjuna**, **Nakula**, and **Sahadeva**.
- **Kunti** (first wife of Pandu, mother of Yudhishthira, Bhima, and Arjuna)
  - Sister of Vasudeva (father of Krishna).
- **Madri** (second wife of Pandu, mother of Nakula and Sahadeva)

Pandavas' Relationships:

- **Yudhishthira**: Eldest son, born from Dharma (Yudhishthira's wisdom aligns with his dharma).
- **Bhima**: Strongest, son of Vayu (wind god).
- **Arjuna**: Master archer, son of Indra (the king of gods).
- **Nakula**: Twin, son of Ashwini Kumar.
- **Sahadeva**: Twin, son of Ashwini Kumar.

3. The Kauravas (sons of Dhritarashtra)

- **Dhritarashtra** (blind king, father of the Kauravas)
  - Married to **Gandhari**, who bore him 100 sons.
- **Gandhari** (mother of the Kauravas)
  - Devoted wife of Dhritarashtra, gave birth to 100 sons, including **Duryodhana** and **Dushasana**.

Kauravas' Relationships:

- **Duryodhana**: The eldest Kaurava, main antagonist of the Pandavas.
- **Dushasana**: Brother to Duryodhana, plays a major role in the disrobing of Draupadi.

- **Karna**: A close friend of Duryodhana, who was a son of Kunti (though he was unaware).

4. The Female Characters

- **Draupadi** (wife of the Pandavas)
  - Born from the fire, married to Yudhishthira first and then to the other four brothers.
- **Kunti** (mother of the Pandavas, also had Karna out of wedlock before marriage)
- **Gandhari** (mother of Kauravas, wife of Dhritarashtra)
- **Subhadra** (sister of Krishna, wife of Arjuna)
  - Mother of Abhimanyu.

5. Important Ancillary Characters

- **Lord Krishna** (Vasudeva, son of Devaki and Vasudeva)
  - Divine incarnation, friend of Arjuna, and a guide to the Pandavas.
  - Played a key role in the Mahabharata as a charioteer to Arjuna and in the Bhagavad Gita's teachings.
- **Vyasa** (author of Mahabharata)
  - Son of Satyavati and the sage Parashara.
  - Father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu, and Vidura (via different women).
- **Shakuni** (maternal uncle of the Kauravas)
  - Brother of Gandhari, played a major role in the rivalry between the Pandavas and Kauravas.
  - Was the one who manipulated Duryodhana and masterminded the game of dice.
- **Vidura** (half-brother of Dhritarashtra and Pandu, son of Vyasa)
  - Advisor to the Kauravas, wise and just.
- **Kripacharya** (royal teacher to the Kauravas and Pandavas)
  - A great teacher in the Mahabharata, mentor to both sides.
- **Dronacharya** (teacher of the Kauravas and Pandavas)
  - Guru to Arjuna, Bhima, Duryodhana, and others.
- **Ashwatthama** (son of Dronacharya)
  - Fought on the Kaurava side, played a role in the final events of the war.

Key Relationships and Conflicts:

1. **Pandavas vs Kauravas**:
   - **Yudhishthira** vs **Duryodhana**: The throne and the conflict over the kingdom.
   - **Bhima** vs **Duryodhana**: Bhima's oath to kill Duryodhana.
   - **Arjuna** vs **Karna**: Rivalry in archery, with deep personal connections.
   - **Draupadi** vs **Duryodhana**: Humiliation of Draupadi in the Kaurava court.
2. **Karna and the Pandavas**:
   - **Karna** vs **Arjuna**: A fight between half-brothers, unknowingly related, stemming from rivalry and honor.
   - **Karna** and **Duryodhana**: Karna's loyalty to Duryodhana, and his actions to fulfill Duryodhana's wishes.

3. **Lord Krishna's Role**:
    - **Krishna and the Pandavas**: Krishna was a close friend and ally, guiding them through the war.
    - **Krishna and the Kauravas**: Krishna tried to mediate peace but failed.
4. **Kunti and Karna**:
    - **Kunti's revelation to Karna**: Kunti reveals Karna's true parentage to him,

Karna remains one of the most tragic yet luminous figures of the Mahābhārata, a warrior whose life was woven with paradoxes of glory and grief. Born of the Sun yet abandoned at birth, crowned with innate brilliance yet burdened with the stigma of caste, his every step was a struggle against destiny. Through the verses of poets, his image shines not merely as a hero of war but as a symbol of resilience, generosity, and unyielding loyalty. His life teaches us that greatness does not always dwell in triumph; sometimes it resides in the refusal to surrender dignity before injustice. Karna's sacrifice and his inner conflict, his kindness towards the poor and his fierce devotion to friendship, make him timeless—an eternal presence in the human imagination. As we close these pages, Karna stands before us not as a defeated warrior but as a moral victor, who bore his suffering with unmatched courage. His story, retold in poetry across ages, whispers to us still: that true nobility lies not in one's birth but in one's deeds, and that even in the silence of loss, the flame of dharma can burn with immortal light.r

अस्मिता प्रकाशन

270/- only